

THROWING OPEN THE DOOR:
PRESERVING PHILADELPHIA'S GAY BATHHOUSES

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This thesis is dedicated to Lauren, Mom, Dad, Katherine, and Gregory.

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Introduction: Throwing Open the Door

While there is a rich body of work on Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender (LGBT) history in terms of social theory and activism, very little of it actually discusses the relationship of the queer community to the built environment. Extant scholarship on bathhouses typically analyzes space through medical or legal studies, which are oppressive frameworks. Further, there is no scholarship that seriously considers the preservation of bathhouses.¹ Most of the spaces already designated by preservationists tell the story of LGBT activism and art, but do not touch on the centrality of sex as a part of gay life. The reality that same-sex attraction is central to gay culture rarely comes into public discussion of homosexuality. The necessity of performing and discussing sexual acts in private means that gay “public” life occurs behind the doors of bathhouses. Additionally, bathhouses have historically been a relatively protected environment compared to bars and cruising grounds (places where men sought sexual partners), “safe” from police and other legal scrutiny overlooked by most historians. George Chauncey, a historian, writes:

They [baths] were some of the first exclusively gay commercial spaces in the city. The most stable of gay institutions, they outlasted every gay bar and restaurant in the city and provided a place safe from police and vigilantes alike in which to meet other gay men. Forthrightly sexual in character, the baths were also important social centers, where gay men could meet openly, discuss their lives, and build a circle of friends. Their distinctive character fostered a sense of community among their patrons.²

Because baths were widespread in almost every major American city and played a role in defining early gay communities, it is important to study gay bathhouses through more than the isolated frameworks of history, medicine, and social theory. The nar-

¹ While there have been no specific bodies of work (that I know of) discussing the preservation of bathhouses, a few articles in newspapers, most notably an article this past summer by *Associated Press*, cover the history of gay Americans as reflected in the life of gay bathhouses. Matt Hamilton, “Gay Bathhouses Nationwide Face Uncertain Future,” *San Jose Mercury News*, August 13, 2014.

² George Chauncey, *Gay New York: Gender, Urban Culture, and the Making of the Gay Male World, 1890-1940* (New York: Basic Books, 1994), 224.

rative of gay or queer society is wed to urban space in this study.³ This thesis concentrates on the geography and history of a particular city, Philadelphia, which while significant in the history of the bathhouse and of gay culture more generally, should not be taken as entirely representative. The City of Brotherly Love has a unique history in that while it is a large city with a popular gay scene, the gay baths have gone undetected for most of the twentieth century. The gay bathhouses were not shut down during the HIV/AIDS epidemic of the 1980s, like they were in San Francisco and New York, and have remained unnoticed compared to those in other large cities with vibrant queer cultures.

Because no study has addressed the issues of urban space, architecture, history, and gay bodies, I have drawn on a wide variety of resources including broad social histories, scientific articles, and place based narratives. Furthermore, because law and society stigmatize homosexuality, detailed historical data are hard to come by. In many instances concrete dates are available, but other numbers are not. It is difficult to grapple with the geography of queer identities given that gay men were not identified by traditional historic resources such as census data, questionnaires, and maps. Writings from Chauncey and architect and theorist Ira Tattelman, along with multiple medical studies, helped to frame the organization of space and architecture in bathhouses. Their arguments lay a strong foundation for the bathhouse story; however, little exists in the way of studies regarding the relation of bathhouses to the larger cities. Most studies focus on the insular nature of bathhouses as separate worlds from the urban contexts in which they stood. A master's thesis by folklorist Jacob Galecki mentions the organization of gay commercial space in Philadelphia, but focuses on bars and theaters, relegating discussion of bathhouses to footnotes. Much of what was written about bathhouses in their day relates to the backlash against the

³ "Queer" will be used in this paper to describe the LGBT and gay community. Historically queer was a derogatory term used to shame homosexuals. Since the late 1970s communities of LGBT people have reclaimed the term by calling themselves and their community queer.

gay community because of HIV/AIDS. Bathhouses became one of many scapegoats for the sexual “promiscuity” prevalent in American culture during the 1970s. Perhaps out of shame or discomfort, historians also tend to ignore the rich history of baths in the gay community during the century before the outbreak of HIV/AIDS.

Many of the spaces that were bathhouses remain threatened, appropriated, or forgotten. Due to the ravages of the HIV/AIDS epidemic, the memory of the hey-day of bathhouses is quickly receding. The history of bathhouses is central to the history of gay culture, and both the memories and physical fabric of these spaces deserve to be recorded. Furthermore, Philadelphia is overlooked by historians of the gay narrative in favor of movements in larger cities like New York City, San Francisco, and Miami. As historian Marc Stein points out, Philadelphia played a key and progressive role in the early days of gay activism, but today little of that history is remembered beyond local memory.⁴

This thesis ties the larger narrative of the urban development of Philadelphia to the history of baths in the urban heart of Philadelphia. In particular, it relies on works that discuss the policing of gay spaces by heteronormative standards and how bathhouses created a uniquely gay space, different from other queer spaces such as bars, restaurants, and cruising grounds. By drawing on queer theory, preservation planning, architecture analysis, cultural studies, and medical research, I have produced a body of work that is relevant to the condition of bathhouses today.

⁴ The 50th anniversary of Reminder Days occurred in the spring of 2015. A main exhibit is on display at Independence Hall recounting the protests led by Frank Kameny and Barbara Gittings on Christopher Street in front of Independence Hall between 1965 and 1969. These protests are often overshadowed by Stonewall, which occurred in the summer of the last Reminder Day in Philadelphia. The main exhibit was accompanied by satellite exhibits throughout the city, including one at the LGBT Center at the University of Pennsylvania.

Gay Bathhouses: A Review of the Literature

Social stigma and legislation criminalizing the soliciting of homosexual encounters and homosexual activity itself has led to a history of men seeking men with other men in a variety of different, usually public locations.

- Paul Flowers et al. 2000

Bathhouse History

Bathhouses are not unique to the gay community in America. They have a long-standing and important place in many cultures. Archaeological digs in Asia have led to the discovery of ruins of some of the oldest public and religious baths in the world, comparable to modern day swimming pools. Built for religious and practical purposes in ancient Greece and Rome, bathhouses acted as gathering spaces for various communities. These baths were considered important cultural institutions, alongside libraries and museums.⁵ Bathhouses re-emerged in relation to the Catholic Church, following designs of those in ancient Rome during the Middle Ages. From the eighteenth through the twentieth centuries, European bathhouses were built mostly for three reasons: as retreats for wealthy people (similar to modern day spas); as places to observe religious and ritual cleaning (most notably for urban Jews); and as places for masses to bathe.⁶ It was these forms of baths that came to exist in the United States between the middle of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

The histories of bathhouses in the United States that are most relevant to this thesis fall into three categories: baths created for poor, immigrant communities in

1 Andrea Renner. "A Nation that Bathes Together: New York City's Progressive Era Public Baths." *Journal of Society of Architectural Historians* Vol. 67 No. 4 (December 2008): 507.

2 Early baths were considered a luxury and therapeutic for upper-middle class patrons. One of the first baths arose in Philadelphia in the 1850s, known as Swaim's Bath, to be covered in more detail in a later chapter. There are many different types of baths, though the two types of baths that will be addressed in this thesis are Turkish and Russian baths. The main difference between these is that Russian baths have about a 60% humidity with a temperature that does not exceed 180°F while Turkish baths are much more humid, keeping humidity around 100%, and have significantly lower temperatures, with the highest being 100°F. Other types of modern baths include Japanese and Finnish saunas, all variations on the Turkish and Russian saunas. Finnish saunas have the highest legal temperature: 212°F. Jewish baths, on the other hand, were specifically designed for sweating, a ritual that is thought to clean the soul and is practiced around the Jewish High Holiday of Yom Kippur, where Jews atone for the sins accumulated during the year.

large cities; baths as places in urban areas for Jewish males to gather and take part in a ritual known as a Shvitz; and lastly the story and development of the gay bathhouses in America. The proliferation of public baths is important to the eventual growth of gay specific bathhouses because these baths familiarized most Americans to the concept of baths. Public baths allowed many more urban people, chief among them men, to have condoned access to gendered spaces where nudity was required.⁷

The modern history of public baths began with the Victorian desire, by concerned wealthy beneficiaries, for control of health and cleanliness of the masses in cities.⁸ Public baths relied on architecture to communicate the use of space and Victorian values regarding the policing of the body to inform propriety. Early public bathhouses were designed to separate the genders and to maintain ultimate efficiency. Fear of homosexual behavior also resulted in the implementation of further rules complementing the architecture that limited the time that bathers spent in one another's company.⁹ At the same time that the builders of baths sought to prevent heterosexual interactions through an experience predetermined by design and architecture, the rules of policing allowed for more homosexual relations. Architecture, complemented by upper middle-class standards of modesty, allowed men desiring to have sex with men to appropriate the space for sex.

Social historian Allan Berubé argues that bathhouses, as semi-private spaces, were a place for gay men as a community to overcome isolation and policing.¹⁰ Berubé was one of the first scholars to outline a general history of the development of gay bathhouses in the United States. He showed that bathhouses switched from "regular" public bathhouses used by the working class community as a place to achieve health and cleanliness to places where men had sex with men (circa 1880-1940). Berubé

3 Renner, 505. More than 97% of New York families living in New York tenements did not have access to a bathroom.

4 Renner, 506.

5 Renner, 520.

6 Allan Berubé, "The History of Gay Bathhouses," *Journal of Homosexuality* (2003) Vol. Issue 3-4: 34.

argues that as the need for public baths declined, the spaces were increasingly appropriated for homosexual activity.¹¹ At the same time, Berubé states that some owners of private bathhouses catered to men desiring same-sex sex, because the business was lucrative. Instead of reporting men who engaged in homosexual activity to the police, bathhouse owners actively provided a private space that facilitated these relationships in order to generate income.¹² Berubé set forth a timeline to argue that spots favored by gay men in the 1930s-1950s rapidly increased in popularity.¹³ Commodification, or the popularizing and marketing, of gay culture was in part related to the strengthening of the homosexual community during World War Two (WWII), as Berubé discusses in *Coming out Under Fire*. Remaining policed places because of supposed threats to morality, bathhouses were at the same time becoming codified through performances by Bette Midler (circa mid-1960s). The rise of HIV/AIDS had a terrible impact on the gay community and resulted in the collapse of popularity of gay bathhouse culture, also increasing scrutiny of gay life.¹⁴

For more than 100 years, baths were important to the sexual lives of gay culture. As early as the 1890s modern bathhouses supported the recurring role of public baths. Nineteenth century newspapers reported “rare” encounters in these public baths, “where men occasionally had sex.”¹⁵ Nearly three quarters of a century later, HIV/AIDS correlated with a clear drop in the number of bathhouses and their popularity has since continued to wane.

Policing of the Homosexual Community

Many politicians, gender and queer theorists, historians, and authors have

7 Berubé, “The History of Gay Bathhouses,” 35.

8 Berubé, “The History of Gay Bathhouses,” 36. These businesses would often pay off police officers to protect the establishment from raids. Sometimes if owners failed to make a payment a raid could ensue.

9 Berubé, “The History of Gay Bathhouses,” 38.

10 Berubé, “The History of Gay Bathhouses,” 37.

11 Matt Mutchler, Trista Bingham, Miguel Chion, Richard Jenkins, Lee Klosinski, and Gina Secura, “Comparing Sexual Behavioral Patterns Between Two Baths,” *Journal of Homosexuality* Vol. 44 Issue 3-4: 223. A more detailed history of baths in Philadelphia will be given in Chapter 4.

studied the regulation and marginalization of LGBT space. In particular, many study the policing of gays and lesbians (and later bisexuals and transgender folks) due to homophobia.¹⁶ As argued in *Queers in Space*, the historical significance of police action is that instead of harassing individual gay men (or queers) there was a collective and active policing of gay men. In other words, there was a cultural intolerance for queer life in most cities, as there was for certain classes and races.¹⁷ Major cities across the country had entire systems of officers responsible for policing gay spaces, from bars, to cruising grounds, to bathhouses and beyond. It was a social movement, a judgment on a sect of people based on sexual activity, and was reinforced by other societal factors including urban planning and economics.¹⁸

Policing systems in urban areas often came into conflict with the gay and lesbian collective identity. David Johnson, George Chauncey, and John D'Emilio argue that gatherings of gays in specific localities allowed queers to form a collective identity that later led to the resistance movements of the mid-twentieth century, which addressed major issues such as the policing of queer space. D'Emilio argues in *Sexual Politics, Sexual Communities* that from a gradual growth of American cities between 1870 and 1930 emerged a group of people who created a subculture based on a collective identity and self-awareness.¹⁹ Chauncey argues that between the end of the nineteenth century and the early twentieth century there was a highly elaborate and complex gay male subculture in New York City that was confined to specific geographic and commercial spaces.²⁰

In the early twentieth century there existed a vibrant subculture in many cit-

12 Yolanda Retter, Anne-Marie Bouthillette, and Brent Ingram, *Queers in Space: Communities, Public Places, Sites of Resistance* (Seattle: Bay Press, 1997), 59.

13 Retter, Bouthillette, and Ingram, 141.

14 See Lizabeth Cohen, *A Consumers' Republic: The Politics of Mass Consumption in Postwar America* Kindle Edition: Knopf Doubleday Printing Group, 2008 and Paul Groth, *Living Downtown: The History of Residential Hotels in United States*. Berkley: University of California, 1994.

15 John D'Emilio, *Sexual Politics, Sexual Communities: The Making of a Homosexual Minority in the United States*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983), 11-13.

16 Chauncey, 3.

ies, but due to increased policing in the 1930s the communities were “forced into hiding.”²¹ Fighting in WWII was vital for many gay men and women, who through the mass mobilization of the war moved to large cities, generally in sex segregated areas.²² The relaxed atmosphere for many government branches and the military during the 1940s ended after the war. World War II forever changed the landscape of American culture. A huge part of the change was in relationships between gender, sex, and sexuality. Long-standing boundaries of masculinity constructed in the eighteenth and nineteenth century were disrupted and all but abolished during the war. The boundaries of normal sexual behavior and gender identity were changed by women who took on traditionally male roles as men left the home front. For the first time, women were encouraged to take on highly industrial positions for paid wages.²³

Changing definitions of gender and sex in the middle of the nineteenth century had both positive and negative effects on the queer community. D’Emilio points out that gay men and women benefited from studies like the Kinsey report, released in the 1950s. Such reports resulted in a larger vocabulary and access to knowledge that allowed many isolated homosexuals to explain their feelings.²⁴ While awareness of what it meant to be homosexual helped many gays and lesbians, it also led to increased attention from those who were concerned about the morality of homosexual activity. With the rise of McCarthyism, the assertion that homosexuals were “psychologically maladjusted,” or the belief that homosexuals were morally weak and would not resist Communism, led to a mass purging of government bureaucracies of homosexuals (or those suspected to be homosexual).²⁵ The crackdown on homosexuals in the government extended to other government organizations like the military, as well

17 Chauncey, 8.

18 For further reading see Allan Berubé, *Coming out Under Fire*, John D’Emilio, *Sexual Politics, Sexual Communities*, and George Chauncey, *Gay New York*.

19 Angus McLaren, *The Trials of Masculinity: Policing Sexual Boundaries, 1870-1930* (Chicago: The University Chicago Press, 1997), 7.

20 D’Emilio, 52.

21 David Johnson, *The Lavender Scare: The Cold War Persecution of Gays and Lesbians in the Federal Government* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 18.

as a heightened awareness of homosexual activity in many cities.

Marginalized sexual communities worked to form political groups (often associated with communism and socialism) to fight back against repression. The first and most famous of these groups was the Mattachine Society, which stressed political gradualism, in contrast to the mass militancy of later homophile groups.²⁶ The development of queer resistance groups is one of the most studied areas in queer theory. Many academics have attempted to unravel the trials and the scope of marginalization and oppression experienced by gays, lesbians, bisexuals, and transgender folks.

Historians and theorists until recently tended to employ narrow interpretations of gay history. They focused on a type of history that supported the narrative that life is/was constantly improving for homosexual people. These writers looked to Stonewall, a famous raid on a bar in New York City, as the pinnacle of the gay revolution.²⁷ Authors like David Eisenbach and John D'Emilio argue that there were political movements among the lesbian and gay community before Stonewall, but Stonewall was significant because it signified a break between gay and lesbian activists who wanted to assimilate and those who were more militant. More recent scholarship has reshaped this story. Many historians now divorce themselves from the dichotomy of before and after Stonewall. George Chauncey writes about an active gay community in New York a century before Stonewall. Mark Stein argues that the pre-post Stonewall narrative is no longer viable. Other academics go beyond studying the traditional forms of resistance, including Stonewall, to study other arenas of policing of gays. Fred Fejes, a professor of media communication, surveyed gay space and media control as a means to argue that regulation of homosexuals is more than a political issue, and instead is cultural warfare.²⁸ As Fejes points out, conflict over gay rights is often

22 D'Emilio, 11.

23 Stonewall was the first site in the United States to be specifically designated for its importance to the LGBTQ community. It became a National Historic Landmark in 1999, and since then four LGBTQ-related sites have been added.

24 Fred Fejes, *Gay Rights and Moral Panic: The Origins of America's Debate on Homosexuality* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2008), 228.

framed as gay rights activists against religious and social conservatives.²⁹ Some academics have merged the history of gay communities with the history of policing of such spaces to argue that the creation of queer space, and dynamics of queer space, are inherently different from those of heteronormative spaces.³⁰

Policing Gay Baths

While early queer communities forged social networks in the streets, like cruising grounds, and in private settings, like apartments, many places where relationships formed were in semi-public, semi-private spaces. George Chauncey gives one of the most comprehensive studies of homosexual activities in baths in *Gay New York*. In a chapter titled “Social World of the Baths,” Chauncey argues that the baths were among the safest and most enduring gathering places for gay men.³¹ Furthermore, as Allan Berubé surmised and Chauncey supported with historical facts, gay baths evolved over a period of time, from a mixed straight and gay space to an exclusively gay space.³² The transition meant that there were exclusively gay spaces with owners that tolerated gay encounters, but these spaces were also exposed to raids by police, subjecting patrons to strict vice control. In early twentieth century New York, raids on baths were carried out infrequently, but often enough to keep wary patrons away.³³ One bath, called the Lafayette, was only raided five times between 1900 and 1940, whereas many bars were raided much more frequently. Chauncey argues that because baths were not sites of public disorder and provided hidden, safe spaces for gay men to have sexual encounters, police viewed baths as more innocuous than bars and cruising grounds where unwanted behavior quickly moved to the streets.³⁴

25 Ibid.

26 William Leap, *Public Space/Gay Space* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999), 5.

27 Chauncey, 207.

28 Chauncey, 208.

29 Chauncey, 212.

30 Chauncey, 214. While baths were raided much less frequently than bars, they were still policed by concerned forces wanting to ensure the proper regulation of sex and gender within urban areas. Gay men could be arrested while traveling home from a bathhouse by police who entrapped them, and this encounter would not be logged as a raid on a bathhouse, but rather would be described as an arrest for lewd or immoral behavior.

Other fields have studied the regulation of gay space. Bathhouses, bars, and theaters have been documented and studied by several social scientists, legal experts, urbanists, and economists. Many legal experts argue that the justice system is inherently biased when it comes to criminalizing gay male sex (and lesbian sex to a lesser degree). The weight of evidence in cases regulating gay movie theaters and baths is much lower than that of cases involving the privacy and sexual activity of heterosexual citizens. Furthermore, authorities often skew(ed) evidence, lumping it together in order to attain the highest possible punishment rate. As a result of the amalgamation of inaccurate evidence, vital information such as the significant difference between anal and oral sexual acts was overlooked.³⁵ One legal student wrote,

The police power gives the government the authority to act in furtherance of public health safety and moral actions taken are presumed to be prior and will only be countermanded by courts if they infringe on fundamental rights . . . the majority opinion relying on the long history of civilization of homosexuality concluded that to claim the right to engage in such a conduct [against homosexuals] is deeply rooted in the national history. . . .

These studies prove that moral regulation of baths, bars, movie theaters, and cruising grounds was most consequential between 1900 and the 1960s. Even during the age of sexual liberation, homosexuality was still illegal in the United States. These places were also in marginalized locations in cities, sometimes by choice, but more often by a series of deliberate social and economic events transpiring at local and national levels. Capitalist and urban trends are documented by authors like Lizabeth Cohen, Paul Groth, Gayle Rubin, and Rosemary Hennessy, who tend to agree that a series of policies resulted in the social and economic relegation of homosexuals to certain urban areas. Thus gay communities and neighborhoods are integral to the subculture of gay baths.

The importance of bathhouses as community spaces for gay men increased

31 Scott Burris, "Legal Aspects of Regulating Bathhouses: Cases from 1984 to 1995," *Journal of Homosexuality* Vol. 43 Issue 3-4 (2003): 141.

in the 1970s. As will be explained, this phenomenon is related to the emphasis on commodity culture in the United States at the time and the ability for homosexuals to be more visible. A larger customer base meant that more services were offered to patrons and the number of facilities grew. Furthermore, other cultural trends impacted the design and use of the bathhouses.³⁶ As a result, during the outbreak of HIV/AIDS the bathhouses became a liminal fighting ground under attack by public health regulations that were fiercely resisted by many gay men.³⁷

Author and editor Christopher Disman's extensive study, "The San Francisco Bathhouse Battles of 1984," analyzes the debates that occurred in San Francisco during the early days of the AIDS epidemic. He argues that the attempt to control the bathhouses was seen as an overreaching and overbearing assault on homosexuality reminiscent of earlier, brutal raids.³⁸ Disman points to 1984 as a "watershed year" for baths, as the unique sexual experience in commercial space came into question with the law and morality during attempts to regulate HIV/AIDS.³⁹

As a part of the debate, legal authorities questioned the public-private aspect of the baths, as well as how the sexual practices that people imposed on the baths affected communities beyond the walls of those spaces. Many of those who were in favor of shutting down the bathhouses argued that the transmission of HIV/AIDS was perpetuated by the existence of bathhouses due to the nature of the sexual relations that occurred there. However, many gay men and others pointed out that bathhouses helped educate patrons, potentially preventing the spread of HIV/AIDS.

As a result of the arguments in the 1980s over what role bathhouses played in contributing to the spread of HIV/AIDS, numerous studies have since addressed this

31 Berubé, "The History of the Gay Bathhouse," 41.

32 Some gay men, such as Randy Shilts and Larry Kramer, argued for closing the baths. They believed that closing the baths would help prevent the spread of HIV/AIDS. See the book *And The Band Played On: Politics, People, and the AIDS Epidemic*.

33 Christopher Disman, "The San Francisco Bathhouse Battles of 1984," *Journal of Homosexuality* Vol. 3 Issue 3-4 (2003): 94.

34 Disman, 117.

issue. Some contemporary scholarship perpetuates the scrutiny and policing of gay space; since the 1990s the operation of baths has become a “visually private place.”⁴⁰ The majority of work about bathhouses focuses on the relationship between sexual practices in the bathhouse, the transmission of HIV/AIDS, and other assessments of risk practices among patrons, not the lives and stories of the people or places.

Philadelphia

Philadelphia experienced a rise and decline in the number of bathhouses much like New York and San Francisco, but Philadelphia is understudied compared to other large metropolitan areas. By the time LGBT studies gained academic currency, Philadelphia’s importance as an epicenter of homosexuality had waned. Despite the decreased historical emphasis on Philadelphia, it has a history comparable to that of other cities. Philadelphia’s public baths mirrored the municipal baths of New York. The largest public bath association in Philadelphia, called the Public Association of Baths, was created in the late nineteenth century by the upper-class citizens of Philadelphia, who tried to further the social and Victorian ideals of the time.⁴¹ The first public baths were built in immigrant neighborhoods in Northern Liberties and Kensington between 1890 and 1930.⁴² By 1950 the public bathhouses had ceased operations due to the cost of maintenance and the fact that most homes and apartments, at this point, had access to bathrooms and running water.⁴³

Despite the existence of exhibits and secondary research on public bathhouses, very few secondary accounts discuss the significance of gay bathhouses in the United States. The studies that come closest to addressing the importance of marginalized communities in Philadelphia and the commercial space of gay communities are Marc Stein’s *City of Sisterly and Brotherly Loves* and Jacob Galecki’s Master’s Thesis on gay

35 Disman, 118.

36 Melissa M. Mandell, “Windows on the Collection: The Public Baths Association of Philadelphia and the Great Unwashed,” *Pennsylvania Legacies* Vol. 7 No. 2 (November 2007): 30.

37 More about the history of baths in Philadelphia will be covered in chapter 4.

38 Mandell, 31.

space in the City of Philadelphia as well as a few other articles and dissertations.

Marc Stein is one of the leading modern historians on LGBT history in America. He argues in *City of Sisterly and Brotherly Loves* that political organizations must be understood beyond the typical dichotomy of before and after Stonewall. As a part of this argument Stein presents evidence that the political organizations that began resistance movements had a basis in Philadelphia decades before Stonewall, and that this information is ignored by several other historians. He suggests that residential patterns and commercial clusters of gays and lesbians in Philadelphia show that queers organized districts of public space to enable political action.⁴⁴ Although his book barely addresses bathhouses, in two sentences he states that bathhouses were especially popular among gay men and lists some of the most frequented.⁴⁵

One of the only other substantial works relevant to gay space in Philadelphia is Galecki's thesis, which focuses on gay commercial space in Philadelphia. He asks what kinds of gay spaces existed in the city, where they were, and why they were there. Galecki argues that bars were one of the most popular types of gay spaces in Philadelphia.⁴⁶ He demonstrates that between 1970 and 1999 the number of gay owned spaces consolidated in terms of geographic spacing, arguing that urban renewal, price fluctuations, and economic patterns determined the size and scope of the gay community in Philadelphia.⁴⁷ Galecki's study consistently shows that gay spaces existed in clusters and typically in less desirable areas of the city with lower rents. However, he points out that the geography of gay spaces in Philadelphia in the 1930s was different from that of the same type of spaces in the 1970s and is even more different from the Gayborhood today.⁴⁸

39 Marc Stein, *City of Sisterly and Brotherly Loves: Lesbian and Gay Philadelphia, 1945-1972* (Philadelphia: University Press, 2004), 21 and 25.

40 Stein, 81.

41 Jacob Galecki, "The Construction and Constriction of Gay Space: Philadelphia, 1970-1999," Master's Thesis, University of Pennsylvania, December 2010, 33.

42 Galecki, 5-8.

43 Galecki, 64-67. The Gayborhood refers to the area of Center City that corresponds to the main thoroughfare of commercial gay space in the city. In this area are many of the popular gay bars,

Both of these works were published in the last ten years, showing that there is an increased interest in LGBT studies, but one that is not nearly comprehensive. A study of library indexes indicates that many more books on queer theory were published between 1990 and the present day than at any other time in American history. The growth in the number of books and articles related to queer studies is reflective of the increased relevance and visibility of LGBT communities.

LGBT Preservation

The Stonewall Inn was designated as a National Register site in 1999, and as a National Historic Landmark in 2000, for its importance to the LGBT community as a site of resistance in the late 1970s. Since then only a few other sites have been nationally designated specifically for their significance to the LGBT community. Four sites were added in the fifteen intervening years, all of them approved in the past three years: the Kameny residence in Washington D.C; Cherry Grove Community House and Theatre on Fire Island in New York; James Merrill's House in Stonington, Connecticut; and the Carrington House, also on Fire Island. This handful of sites is important for artists and gay rights activists. However, since 2000 there has been a call to designate more LGBT spaces.⁴⁹

Architectural historian Gail Dubrow, in her article "Blazing Trails with Pink Triangles and Rainbow Flags," calls for a further examination of the steps necessary to preserve LGBT heritage in the United States. She argues that it would take more than designations of places associated with singular gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender people, but rather would require a collection of sites related to LGBT life to tell the story of the "broader movement for social, political, and cultural equity."⁵⁰ Dubrow restaurants, theaters, and other commercial spaces frequented by members of the gay community. Recently the space has been featured as one of the most gentrifying areas of the city and one of the most prosperous. See Chapter 2.

44 Gail Lee Dubrow, "Blazing Trails with Pink Triangles and Rainbow Flags: Improving the Preservation and Interpretation of Gay and Lesbian Heritage," in *Restoring Women's History Through Historic Preservation*, edited by Gail Lee Dubrow and Jennifer B. Goodman (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003), 281.

45 Dubrow, 282.

outlines sites that are already designated and have associations with queer folks as examples of places that could further the discussion of queerness in connection with the occupant. These examples include Willa Cather's home in Red Cloud Nebraska, Walt Whitman's home not far from Philadelphia in New Jersey, and Eleanor Roosevelt's vacation spot in Val-Kill, Hyde Park.⁵¹ She argues that without a fuller explanation of these people in relation to their places, the story (for both homosexuals and Americans) is incomplete.⁵² Furthermore, Dubrow urges the preservation community to think about what other sites could be designated and what the criteria should be.⁵³ Finally, Dubrow questions how larger designations such as entire historic districts for LGBT neighborhoods and urban areas might be handled, since many of these neighborhood designations could lead to political backlash.⁵⁴

In the summer of 2014 the National Park Service launched a new LGBT initiative to "identify places and events associated with the story of LGBT Americans for inclusion in the parks and programs of the National Park Service," addressing many of Dubrow's concerns and challenges.⁵⁵ During the summer of 2014 scholars familiar with LGBT issues met in Washington, D.C. to debrief about what it meant to combine the history of the LGBT community with the built environment. Scholars were asked to take the message to grassroots organizations. Communities around America have started compiling lists of potential sites. The National Park Service advertised a list of grants for designating LGBT sites. Several larger cities like Los Angeles and San Francisco are creating guidelines for local designation, but many of these documents will not be available until the end of 2015 and beyond.

Preservation of LGBT spaces remains a new concept with many untapped

46 Dubrow, 290.

47 See Dubrow, "Blazing Trails with Pink Triangles and Rainbow Flags."

48 Dubrow, 297.

49 Ibid.

50 "Lesbian, Bisexual, Gay and Transgender Heritage Initiative," National Park Service, last modified July 25, 2014, last accessed December 15, 2014, <http://www.nps.gov/heritageinitiatives/LGBThistory/>.

ideas, but some preservationists and architectural historians like Dell Upton, Daniel Bluestone, and Ned Kaufman offer frameworks to help preservationists think about diversity and inclusion in the field of preservation. Their work tends to focus largely on issues of class, gender, and race rather than LGBT studies. However, their ideas can be applied to this thesis in thinking about how to harness the narrative of the bathhouse to aid preservation. Wedding the literature of the built environment and the history of the queer community is one of the challenges facing preservationists today. Bathhouses are not unique in having a small body of literature that addresses the history of the space and an equally small body of literature that discusses the importance of the space. For bathhouses the architecture and location are vital; however, while there are resources to draw on, much of the story is unwritten.

Bathhouse Architecture

Much of what makes a place queer is intangible and subliminal, and the visual aspect and feeling of queer space is often commercial in nature.⁵⁶ In addition, clear markers of queer space tend to be known only to those who are a part of the community. These styles and trends move beyond the “queer community” into other areas of society, in what Christopher Reed calls “trickle-down popularity.” By the time the identifiers reach the masses, they are no longer as strongly associated with queer space and culture.⁵⁷

Nonetheless, queer spaces are important in that they help form identity for a community that suffers from real and perceived threats from a heteronormative society.⁵⁸ According to queer theorists Retter et al., “Patterns of access to a range of landscapes and amenities are often indicators of persistent broader disparities of environmental costs and benefits [of] freedom of expression and security. These inequities are increasingly obvious among sexual minorities along lines of gender, race, nation-

51 Christopher Reed, “Eminent Domain: Queer Space in the Built Environment,” *Art Journal* Vol. 55 No. 44 (Winter 1996): 66.

52 Reed,” 69.

53 Retter, Bouthillette, and Ingram, 4.

ality, ethnicity, language, age, mobility, and they are being increasingly questioned and confronted.”⁵⁹ Furthermore, it is important to recognize that issues of self-expression and security have heightened importance for queer folks, whose risk of policing and brutality is proportionally larger than that felt by heterosexuals.⁶⁰ As a result, baths, bars, and theaters could be found in certain neighborhoods among the company of other marginalized groups.⁶¹ The networks, activities, and bonds formed in the spaces appropriated by the LGBT community have more significance for the construction of a collective identity and public memory than for analogous spaces among heteronormative communities.⁶²

Aaron Betsky, an architect and historian who writes about the design of queer space including baths, argues that gay space is designed to be somewhat feminized to reflect the middle-class domestic setting. Further, the way a bathhouse is built is a reflection of the internal and community struggles of gay men. He suggests that mirroring an “artificial appearance” is equivalent to passing as straight, and therefore queer space is filled with the elements of reflection.⁶³ Betsky believes that a part of queer architecture that can be seen in bathhouses, bars, and movie theaters along with mirroring is a recess, a “dark” and “hidden” space that imitates the closet gays face in life.⁶⁴ Finally, he claims that while gay architecture is harrowing, it is “free from

54 Retter, Bouthillette, and Ingram, *Queers in Space*, 35.

55 Ibid.

56 Ramón A. Gutiérrez, “Mapping the Erotic Body: Gay New York,” *American Quarterly* Vol. 48 No. 3 (1996): 505-506. This meant that neighborhoods in cities for the poor and underserved, often home to people of color, had a disproportionate number of gay spaces. In addition, places that were home to drug addicts, alcoholics, and prostitutes were also familiar neighbors to gay spaces. Lurid Locust, a place in Philadelphia where gay spaces were prominent (as will be discussed in chapter 2), was frequented by prostitutes and gangs.

57 Gutiérrez, 258. It is important to understand that queer space varies for all types of queer people based on sexual preferences, gender, age, and location. It is also key that while there are differences in types of queer space for different genders, sexual identities, and races, there are typologies or stereotypes that can be used to identify a space. For example, an informed gay man can identify a subculture aligned with their sexual preference by certain words a man uses, or how a man dresses. This goes beyond sexual partners; gay men are also able to read the landscape to find bars, bathhouses, and movie theaters because certain repetitions in pattern, design, architecture, and setting indicate affiliation with certain groups like leather bars and S&M.

58 Aaron Betsky, *Architecture and Same Sex Desire* (New York: William Morrow and Company, Inc., 1997), 17.

59 Betsky, 21.

the outside world.”⁶⁵ While Betsky’s claims may be exaggerated, there is no doubt that an element of reflectiveness is built into the bath environment. Baths are usually dark, mazelike spaces, but are described by patrons as titillating and energizing rather than haunting. The purpose of the maze is to increase the arousal and mystery of finding an anonymous sexual partner.

If one assumes that queer space is inherently different from heteronormative space because of policing, and that historically gay spaces have been semi-public, semi-private spaces in commercial districts, it makes sense that bathhouses are on the margins of society, that they must have unique characteristics identifiable by gay men, and that their design must in some way inform the identity of the patrons. Though there were and are differences between the amenities in private and public baths and baths that catered to different classes of gay men, the layout of baths tends to be familiar to those who frequent them.⁶⁶ Baths of the early twentieth century had a vestibule where patrons checked in and exchanged valuables for a towel before leaving to cruise the premises. The baths included wet and dry spaces, with a mixture of saunas, pools, and gym areas. There were often a number of different rooms, some for individual use and some for group use.⁶⁷

While Chauncey addresses the bathhouse design for the early part of the twentieth century, Ira Tattelman discusses the social organization of space in the second half of the century. Little has changed from the early design of bathhouses. Tattelman argues that the distinct but still familiar arrangement of space dictates patrons’ interactions and activity within the bathhouse. He says that each space has a tone and meaning determined by the plan, finishes, and details.⁶⁸ As in the early twentieth century, most bathhouses still contain a check-in space and a mixture of public and

60 Betsky, 21.

61 Chauncey, 212.

62 Chauncey, 211 and 212.

63 Ira Tattelman, “Speaking to the Gay Bathhouse: Communicating in Sexually Charged Spaces,” in William Leap, *Public Sex/Gay Sex*, 77.

private spaces, ranging from small rooms for rent by the hour to large group spaces. Wet rooms, dry rooms, and neutral zones like lounges and snack rooms (designed for those wanting to stay clear of those cruising) all developed as a result of the commercialization of the bathhouse. Tattelman takes the readers through the progression of experiences that a patron might have in a bathhouse, arguing that the “erotic body” and need for sex creates the flow of space.⁶⁹ He concludes by arguing that the spatial forms of the baths create a safe space for gay men to take risks in sexual advances when otherwise they might not.⁷⁰

Betsky, Chauncey, and Tattelman show that the design of space is partially informed by sexuality. Betsky demonstrates that queer identity translates into architecture that is unique to the gay community. However, this argument has its limitations because not all queer spaces have the qualities he points out, and his ideas are based on artistic interpretation. Chauncey and Tattelman argue that the architecture of bathhouses is based on the desired sexual experience. But some gay spaces, like bars, movie theaters, cruising grounds, and homes, share the same qualities of bathhouses. Thus the bathhouse has a unique architecture that is special to both the gay community and the sub-culture associated with the bathhouses.

Conclusion

The literature that identifies the importance of the bathhouse does not suggest how preservationists should approach bathhouses. This thesis attempts to take into consideration LGBT history; the subculture development of the bathhouse; the marginalization of non-normative societies; and the wealth of social theory about queer communities, while also reflecting on writings about architecture, space, and Philadelphia gay “zones” to address the preservation of bathhouses. It ties together the narrative of the gay community, the bathhouses, and gay urban Philadelphia. The thesis brings together this history and the importance of the urban environment to

64 Tattelman, 90.

65 Tattelman, 92

resolve the relationship of the built fabric to the narrative of gay bathhouses in Philadelphia and suggests models that preservationists might consider for gay bathhouses.

The Gay Ghetto: Mapping Geographies of the Queer Community

Tolerance coupled with institutional concentration makes the areas desirable residential districts for gays. Many homosexuals, especially those publicly labeled as gay or open about their orientation, settle in those areas. At this point, the areas have become partially developed gay ghettos.

-Martin Levine, 1979

Introduction

There tend to be two types of organizational factors that play a role in mapping a city's geography. One is the idealized organization of a city created by economic, planning, and political policies that attempt to determine the urban design. However, the reality is that urbanites congregate, socialize, work, and live in various areas of cities according to their identities as well as other systemic factors. In most large western metropolises in Europe and America in the late nineteenth century, certain individuals recognized that their sexual identity differed from the majority, heterosexuals who preferred having opposite sex relationships. These individuals in the next forty to fifty years would develop a sense of collective identity and forge social systems in large metropolises.

Between 1940 and today, changing demographic patterns and political policies have allowed some queers great access to like-minded communities, eventually leading to the formation of a subculture based on sexual identity. Often relying on verbal communication and personal connections, early sexual minorities communicated via the "gay grapevine" to learn where to gather, about certain events, and to gossip.¹ For affirmation, protection, and convenience, gay men and women concentrated in specific urban spaces. These neighborhoods tended to have many commercial spaces that tolerated and catered to homosexuals as well as other LGBTQ residents. The Bowery, Hell's Kitchen, and The Village in New York; the Tenderloin and the Castro

¹ John D'Emilio, 11. See also George Chauncey, 3, and Brett Beemyn, *Creating a Place for Ourselves: Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Community Histories* (New York: Routledge, 1997), 11.

in San Francisco; Dupont Circle in the District of Columbia; and Boystown in Chicago are all similar to the Gayborhood in Philadelphia and are products of the gathering of the LGBTQ community to form distinct patterns of living in a centralized geography within the city.²

Because the meaning of place and the stories behind identity are not independent of one another, it is important to understand the historic development of human geographies. This chapter covers the general characteristics shared by places in urban areas that were and remain populated and frequented by LGBTQ people. These neighborhoods were often referred to as gay slums or gay ghettos but have come to be known as gay districts, gayborhoods, and gay villages. The section will outline the types of commercial spaces that existed in many gay ghettos throughout the United States and will address specific patterns of living for LGBTQ people within Philadelphia. Finally, it will provide a foundational understanding of the localities and neighborhoods that remain important to the discussion and analysis of bathhouse preservation in later chapters.

What is the Gay Ghetto?

By the 1890s small communities of gay men were congregating in cities, making them the center of their lives.³ Having to hide their homosexuality from the straight world, many gay men (and women) retreated to predominantly queer spaces that felt safe. These neighborhoods had apartments, bathhouses, cafeterias, saloons,

² Boystown, the East Lakeview neighborhood bordering Lake Michigan, was the first officially politically legitimized gay neighborhood in the United States. In 1998 the city of Chicago paid for the erection of rainbow pylons (symbols of the queer community) on streets such as North Halstead, recognizing LGBT historic sites. Many cities have followed suit. Today in Philadelphia the Gayborhood is recognized by street signs that have the rainbow flag at the bottom. In 2007 Mayor John Street approved dedication of the rainbow signs (36 in total). Several of the streets are known by other names within the Gayborhood, including Barbara Gittings Way, which was one of the most recently dedicated. Bob Skiba, "The Roots of the Gayborhood, the Eve of a Milestone," *HiddenCity*, February 7, 2014, last accessed January 24, 2015, <http://hiddencityphila.org/2014/02/the-roots-of-the-gayborhood-the-eve-of-a-milestone/>. See also Julie Bolcer, "Rainbow Street Signs Dedicated in Philadelphia's 'Gayborhood,'" *Go Magazine*, July 12, 2007, last accessed January 24, 2015, http://www.gomag.com/article/rainbow_street_signs_dedi.

³ Chauncey, 2-3.

bars, restaurants, and theaters catering mostly to the working class, immigrants, African-Americans, artists, and others. Spaces within the neighborhoods tended to be sex-segregated based on labor and gendered divisions that carried over from Victorian notions of 'separate spheres.' Such segregation provided opportunities for homosexuality to flourish. Some historians argue that Victorian ideologies of gender were rooted in the religiously based theory that men and women were inherently different: men had traits suited for work in the public sphere, while women had characteristics that allowed for them to be in the domestic sphere.⁴

Within sex-segregated spheres, homosexual spaces tended to be on the periphery of society in marginalized areas, which were not necessarily isolated, but were places where "undesirable" communities lived. These spaces were situated in noisy, crowded parts of the city, often in working class neighborhoods, near industrial centers, artistic communities, or areas where people of color lived.⁵ Social geographer William Knapp argues that gay commercial spaces were areas of "conflict" because they challenged aspects of "dominant" order and therefore were pushed to peripheral locations like the slums.⁶ These areas became more deeply scrutinized with twentieth century movements like the City Beautiful Era and times of urban revitalization that sought to create a distinct elite and middle-class character of major urban areas.⁷

Before the 1930s commercial spaces in working class neighborhoods were relatively tolerant of gay men, especially those with effeminate mannerisms and dress. A vast network for gay culture developed in these environments. Dance halls, saloons,

⁴ Lawrence Knopp, "Sexuality and Urban Space: A Framework for Analysis" in David Bell and Gill Valentine, *Mapping Desire: Geographies of Sexualities* (New York: Routledge, 1995), 149. Victorian ideologies of gender were rooted in the theory that women and men were fundamentally and biologically different in part because of the way their Creator (God) intended the world to function. Therefore men were designed to be in the public sphere handling hard labor, politics, and money and were meant to take care of women and families by providing for them. On the other hand, in the private or domestic sphere, women were to care for children and manage the home.

⁵ Chauncey, 34

⁶ Lawrence Knopp, "Sexuality and Urban Space: A Framework for Analysis," 152.

⁷ William Wilson, *The City Beautiful Movement: Creating the North American Landscape* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994). See also Paul Groth, *Living Downtown: The History of Residential Hotels in the United States*.

bars, cafeterias, and theaters were some of the most popular places for working class communities to gather and socialize, and were also frequented by gay men (and some lesbian women) during their outings. At these establishments homosexuals adopted a hyperfeminine or campy persona in order to indicate their sexuality, earning the label “invert” or “deviant” because they behaved more like women than men. Some men also catered to the sexual ‘needs’ of working class migrant workers such as sailors and dockworkers, taking on the traditional woman’s role. Other times they would perform camp as a part of the bohemian culture that existed in various establishments, especially through burlesque, opera, or jazz performances.⁸

Camp was an exaggerated performed persona adopted by gay men. The character acted as a barrier of protection against harassment by heterosexuals and was widely tolerated because it was acknowledged as theatrical.⁹ Camp is not only an “alibi” for queer men but is also critically linked to fashionableness and marketability of gay male identity. The economic implications of a particular behavior, in this case camp, are associated with the monetary value placed on a culture. Bohemian queer camp was sought after by upper-class city dwellers who would “go slumming” in order to attend performances by queers in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Theaters such as the Bowery in New York were typical slumming destinations for the rich. Later in the twentieth century, patterns of dress, dance, and behavior that originated in the queer community were adopted and remarketed for heterosexuals. The popularity of drag show competitions and intonated vocabulary with words such as “Yass” and “gurl” are modern day illustrations of camp. Furthermore, bars, restaurants, and even homes in former gayborhoods like the Castro are now pursued by

⁸ Robert G. Allen, *Horrible Prettiness: Burlesque and American Culture* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1991).

⁹ Alice Friedman, *Women and the Making of the Modern House* (New York, Harry A. Abrams, Inc, 1998), 152. See also Laura Doan, *Fashioning Sapphism: The Origins of Modern English Lesbian Culture* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001), 95-125 and Alice Friedman, “Queer Old Things,” *Places Journal* (February 2015), last accessed March 28, 2015, <https://placesjournal.org/article/queer-old-things/>.

straight wealthy businessmen and women. In effect, queer culture, though not always condoned, has in some ways subliminally influenced the market.¹⁰

Despite the increase of visible homosexual activity during Prohibition, the vast majority of gays and lesbians remained invisible for fear of the law well into the twentieth century. The policing of deviants occurred in many cities at the end of the nineteenth century and into the twentieth. New statutes in the 1930s, aimed at urban reform, led to a strict crackdown on behavior, vices, and crimes in the areas where gay men socialized. The transformation of the gay ghettos and slums because of new laws had a dramatic impact on gay bars, saloons, opera houses, coffee shops, and theaters. Prohibition and the Depression also led to a decline in places where homosexual behavior and references were once acceptable, particularly public performances and theater productions. Chauncey concludes *Gay New York* by observing, “The new regulation not only codified the ban on gay visibility but raised the stakes for those who considered violating it . . . the marginalization and segregation of the gay world set the stage for broader changes in the world and in American culture.”¹¹ In other words, after a seemingly liberal period in the early 1900s, America was becoming more conservative in the middle to late half of the twentieth century.

Chauncey was right: until recently, gay men separated their public lives from their “gay lives.” Before sexual liberation in the 1970s, many men were forced to cultivate two separate identities, one that allowed them to explore their sexuality and one used to live as a supposed heterosexual.¹² Between the 1890s and the 1930s queer communities existed in small pockets in marginalized urban areas. Homosexuals formed relationships with other unaccepted groups like artists and often lived and worked in establishments like hotels. The connection between moral impropriety and hotels was so strong that even in the middle of the twentieth century hotels were

¹⁰ Matthew Tinkcom, *Working Like a Homosexual: Camp, Capital, Cinema* (Durham, Duke University Press, 2002), 1-35.

¹¹ Chauncey, 42, 38, 186-191, 300-311, 356 and 358.

¹² Chauncey, 38-40.

associated with drug addicts, prostitutes, and homosexuals.¹³ However, a change in policies between the late 1920s and 1930s led to decreased tolerance of the type of atmosphere that allowed the growth of homosexual culture, causing a decline in visibility of the queer community, which did not re-emerge until after the Second World War.

After World War Two there was a rise in homosexual culture as a result of mass mobilization on the home front. Gay men and women in the 1930s and 1940s, especially in rural areas, grew up isolated from queer culture with no one to help them understand their feelings. As Alan Berubé explains, the need for mobilization meant a relaxation in the social and political constraints of the war period. Thus the barriers that prevented gay men and women from communicating with one another disintegrated with the onset of the war. Berubé declares: "Gathered together in military camps, they often came to terms with their sexual desires, fell in love, made friends with other gay people, and began to name and talk about who they were. When they could get away from military bases, they discovered and contributed to the rich nightlife - parties, bars, and nightclubs - that flourished in the war-boom cities."¹⁴

In other words, because there was a large migration of people from the countryside to urban epicenters, gays and lesbians who were previously isolated gained access to knowledge and information about the queer community and their own identities. The lesbian women who came to war-boom cities for work and the gay men coming home from foreign shores stayed in large cities. These men and women were not content going back into the closet. Instead the war acted as a cultural awakening for gays and lesbians, forming a catalyst for seeking rights and recognition by the government and other societal structures such as religious institutions.¹⁵

From 1945 to the 1970s, gay men and women built communities on founda-

13 Groth, 47.

14 Berubé, *Coming Out Under Fire*, Introduction, 6-7, 21, and 45.

15 For further insights see Berubé's *Coming Out Under Fire*.

tions that were created during the wartime period and strengthened by post-war policies. These communities took root in areas that often saw decreasing housing and commercial real estate prices after the war as a result of many white Americans transitioning to the suburbs. Due to these vacuums of empty space and decreased prices, many of the formerly majority white neighborhoods became home to African-American communities, artists, queers, and other marginalized people. The trend of suburbanization after WWII played a critical role in the development of the twentieth century gay ghettos in many American cities, including Philadelphia. In addition to the mass mobilization that brought queers to the inner city and the suburbanization that created the space, other trends that played a key role in developing strong gay communities were city planning practices and reliance on capitalist driven markets.¹⁶

While suburbanization in the middle of the twentieth century meant a shift away from urban cores as economic centers in exchange for the suburbs, cities remained the center of gay life. After American GIs returned home from the war, many federal policies in the 1940s and 1950s helped create space for mostly single, white gay men (and some women) to move into the city centers. First, the demand for housing and loans to subsidize the massive growth of racially exclusive suburbs meant that many white middle-class urbanites who wanted to start heteronormative families moved from the urban core to the periphery of the city.¹⁷ This trend led to the economic collapse of many neighborhoods. The result of many whites moving to the suburbs was that urban cores were comprised mostly of African-Americans who were systematically excluded from the suburbs. As those who could afford to relocated, housing prices decreased dramatically.¹⁸ This meant that young queer people could

16 Alan Sears, "Queer Capitalism: What's Left of Lesbian and Gay Liberation?" *Science & Society* Vol. 69 No. 1 (Jan. 2005): 104 and Lizabeth Cohen, "A Consumer's Republic: The Politics of Mass Consumption in Postwar America," *Journal of Consumer Research* 32 1 (2004): 236.

17 Cohen, "A Consumer's Republic: The Politics of Mass Consumption in Postwar America," 236 and Lizabeth Cohen, *A Consumers' Republic: The Politics of Mass Consumption in Postwar America* (Kindle Edition: Knopf Doubleday Printing Group, 2008), 2176 -2178.

18 Lawrence Knopp, "Some Theoretical Implications of Gay Involvement in an Urban Land Market," *Political Geography Quarterly* Vol. 1 No. 4 (October 1990): 341

more easily afford to move into these city centers that were more welcoming than the heterosexual, family oriented suburbs.¹⁹

Certain city planning policies were a second contributing factor to the decrease of land prices in neighborhoods around metropolitan centers. Many cities like New York and Philadelphia used urban grant renewal funds from the federal government to clear large swaths of urban fabric to revitalize neighborhoods.²⁰ The speculation of various planning projects also led to price drops in certain areas.²¹ Construction of new commercial corridors meant mass removal of older urban fabric. As these areas were targeted for demolition, the land became less valuable. The drop in prices allowed young, white, mostly college educated homosexuals to move into these city centers.²² Studies by Manuel Castells and Lawrence Knopp, of San Francisco and New Orleans respectively, demonstrate a strong connection between urban land market values and homosexuals.

A third contributor to the foundation of the gay community was increased emphasis on the consumer economy in the United States, which was also an outcome of the boom economy created by military efforts during the war. Federal policies continued to stress economic recovery by supporting mass consumerism of new items in a diverse range of markets. The thought was that consumption would drive the economy, preventing another depression as well as enhancing the individual citizen and in turn strengthening democracy.²³ Because of these ideals, the government backed mass marketing, production, and consumerism, which generated trends like suburbanization. Mass commodification also produced an expectation that there would be

19 Knopp, "Some Theoretical Implications of Gay Involvement," 342.

20 Cohen, *The Politics of Mass Consumption*, 4682-4622.

21 Knopp, "Some Theoretical Implications of Gay Involvement," 341.

22 Knopp, "Some Theoretical Implications of Gay Involvement," 338 and Manuel Castells and Karen Murphy, "Cultural Identity and Urban Structure: The Spatial Organization of San Francisco's Gay Community," in Norman I. Fainstein and Susan S. Fainstein eds. *Urban Policy Under Capitalism* (Beverly, CA: Sage, 1982).

23 Cohen, "A Consumer's Republic," 236-237. See also Cohen, *A Consumer's Republic: The Politics of Mass Consumption in Postwar America*.

a variety of goods and services available, including a variety of bars, cafés, and other public spaces catering to the different markets of queer life.

The fourth and final factor that helped create space for gays and lesbians in downtowns across the country was the automobile, along with urban planners' strategies for accommodating the automobile. The first phase of post-war urban development spawned by automobiles lasted from the 1940s through the 1960s.²⁴ This story is twofold: first the rise of consumerism led to mass ownership of automobiles, which were necessary for a suburban lifestyle.²⁵ Second, city planners attempted to accommodate automobiles by building highways between the suburbs and cities. Planners thought that new expressways supported by federal funding could bring new life into downtowns, creating a revitalization that would not be realized until later in the twentieth century.²⁶

The space created by the influences outlined above made it easier for single homosexuals to afford to live in the city. Furthermore, queers who did not feel welcome in the heterosexual suburbs were happy to make the city home. Until recently, gay bars were primarily located in skid rows, pornography districts, areas scheduled for urban renewal projects, old commercial strips, areas of warehouses, and industrial corridors.²⁷ These were the places that were left, where queers, people of color, and other groups could afford to live in relative peace.²⁸ The degrees of social value placed on city spaces continually helped to determine the location of marginalized sexual communities.²⁹ Federal policies supported white, heterosexual, middle-class living styles, so suburbs received more economic backing. Because queers, women,

24 Owen Gutfreund, *Twentieth Century-Sprawl: Highways and the Reshaping of the American Landscape* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004).

25 Cohen, *A Consumer's Republic*, location 2189 and 4735.

26 Gregory Heller, *Ed Bacon: Planning Politics and the Building of Modern Philadelphia* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013), 150-151.

27 Geurtsen, "Sex in the Margins," 3. See also Gayle Rubin, "The Catacombs: A Temple of the Butthole," in Mark Thompson, ed. *Leatherfolk: Radical Sex, People, Politics, and Practice* (Boston: Alyson Publications, 1991) and Barbara Weightman's "Gay Bars as Private Places," *Landscape* Vol. 24 (1).

28 Paul Groth, 17.

29 Weightman, 11.

the poor, and people of color held less societal value, they received less economic investment, remaining discriminated against and invisible. Their lives and locations were determined by the aforementioned practices.³⁰

Though they were in areas of America that were clearly less economically vital than the suburbs, many inner city gayborhoods were in zones that could offer white-collar and service employment (mostly for white male professionals), providing an income base for single, childless homosexuals. For example, many large cities had banks, universities, and managerial positions.³¹ The so-called migration of gay professionals to major metropolises from 1940 onwards occurred on a relatively large scale across the country and can be directly linked to economic and social forces that allowed the first relocation of queers into the city.³² This is not to say that there were no homosexual spaces in cities before the middle of the twentieth century, but rather that commercialization and mass commodification dramatically increased the visibility of gay spaces post WWII. As a direct result of consumerism, there were increased numbers of specifically gay spaces like bars and theaters that every year led to increased relocation of homosexuals and the eventual growth of the community.

As previously discussed, America's post-war consumption-driven economy spurred economic development, but it also created more choices for Americans. Buying became synonymous with being a good citizen and furthering democratic values, especially in the face of the Cold War. Markets were created that reinforced social stratification, targeting specific populations by race, gender, age, and class.³³ American federal policies and businesses went to great lengths to maintain big markets with a high volume of goods and services.³⁴ Furthermore, consumerism and market segments led to the creation of more sub-cultures within the gay minority. Spaces ap-

30 Groth, 55.

31 Lawrence Knopp, "Urban Land Markets," 46. It is important to note that while cities did not have a booming economy by the 1970s, they were doing better than non-urban areas.

32 Knopp, "Urban Land Markets...", 50.

33 Cohen, "A Consumer Republic," 236 and 239.

34 Cohen, *A Consumer Republic*, 2154-2156.

peared catering to specific preferences, such as bars for younger, clean-shaven men, or for older more mature looking men. Leather bars sprung up in many parts of the country, gay and lesbian space was frequently divided, and blacks and whites often did not socialize together.

Legitimization of gay space was a two-fold process. The first step was creating a gay community base strong enough to sustain a variety of businesses that catered specifically to homosexuals. The second step, more importantly, was the growing visibility of homosexuals in society through political movements like gay liberation. At the same time that the gay liberation movement was building, gays and lesbians (mostly educated, white, and middle-class) continued to move to the center of cities.³⁵ Post-war homosexual communities, once gathered in cities, mobilized gay liberation politics that some argue were launched after the Stonewall Riots in 1969.³⁶ These efforts were largely focused on advancing the visibility and strength of the queer community (though it was still nebulously defined) and sought to challenge the existing gender, racial, and class norms of the time. Community growth was a central concern, as empowerment and reclaiming identity meant striving for new levels of public visibility.³⁷

However, it was not until after sexual liberation that gay consumerism was legitimized and there were large enough numbers of middle-class gays in neighborhoods for gay urban centers to truly thrive. As a result of the consumerist practices encouraged by the United States government, the number and type of gay places grew. Disco bars and gay magazines proliferated in many cities; Philadelphia was home to the popular magazine *Drum*, written by and for gay men. Consumerism also helped solidify identities for those involved in the LGBTQ community by allowing access to information that had not previously existed on such a large scale.³⁸ The broad avail-

35 Knopp, "Some Theoretical Implication of Gay Involvement," 341.

36 Alan Sears, 96. See also D'Emilio, *Sexual Politics, Sexual Communities*.

37 Mark Casey, "Sexual identity-politics: activism from gay to queer and beyond," in Anthony Elliot, *Routledge Handbook of Identity Studies* (New York: Routledge, 2011), 280.

38 Lucas Hilderbrand, "A Suitcase Full of Vaseline, or Travels in the 1970s Gay World," *Journal of the History of Sexuality* Vol. 22 No. 3 (September 2013): 377.

ability of gay and lesbian publications meant that young queers not living in the city could learn about what it meant to be gay or lesbian. Furthermore, by the end of the 1970s queer culture became a political issue covered by the media. Yet some of these spaces, like baths and leather bars, still tended to be hidden, discreet, and in marginalized areas because homosexuality was still criminalized.³⁹

As the gay community has gained prominence, neighborhoods with gay men and women have gentrified.⁴⁰ Many sociologists have studied communities of gays and lesbians in cities and their connections with political activity and urban land markets. In addition to holding land investments, gays gained political powers. One example is the authority held by gays in San Francisco, where the community successfully elected Harvey Milk as a city council member in 1978, as well as making notable changes to property values.⁴¹ Gay life, once rooted, influenced national discussions, appearing in the news and political debates. Recently, the media has focused on Freedom to Marry, a group of activists lobbying for same-sex marriage, backed by the Human Rights Campaign. In the 1970s the nation focused on the fight for gay men to be allowed to teach in schools in California. Anita Bryant's campaign, "Save Our Children," was directed toward repealing an ordinance that had been enacted to prohibit discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation.

By the 1980s several neighborhoods inhabited by gay men had increased in property values, leading to gentrification and less diverse demographics of areas known as gay ghettos. As the number of homosexuals increased in a neighborhood, commercial spaces, real estate, and housing came to be dominated by queer men, forging a strong alliance that was hard to penetrate. Yet at the same time that the

39 Wouter Geurtsen, "Sex in the Margins" in Stephen Whittle, *The Margins of the City: Gay Men's Urban Lives* (Brookfield: Ashgate Publishing Company, 1994), 44. See also D'Emilio, *Sexual Politics, Sexual Communities*.

40 Stein, 25 and Gill Valentine, "Negotiating and Managing Multiple Sexual Identities: Lesbian Time-Space Strategies" *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* Vol. No. 2 (1993): 237.

41 Lawrence Knopp, "Urban Land Markets and Neighborhood-based Gay Community Development" in *Homo Economics: Capitalism, Community and Lesbian and Gay Life*, ed. Amy Gluckman and Betsy Reed (New York: Routledge, 1997).

gay community invested in their neighborhoods, they remained mostly white and middle-class.⁴² Reinvestment meant attracting more like-minded people – educated, white, middle-class men – to the area, simultaneously increasing real estate values and pricing out poorer homosexuals, thus creating a class divide.⁴³ Gentrification occurred in many areas, including Greenwich Village, the Castro, and Philadelphia’s Gayborhood.

The advent of HIV/AIDS severely impacted the gay communities that had arisen in the previous decades. Combined with political and societal backlash under new conservative policies of the 1980s, neighborhoods dwindled and suffered.⁴⁴ First, before HIV/AIDS, gays and lesbians began to see setbacks including repeals of sexual harassment ordinances and anti-discrimination laws implemented in the 1970s. Furthermore, conservative leadership under President Ronald Reagan and George Bush Sr. failed to address the emerging AIDS crisis and simultaneously continued the criminalization of homosexuality. Though a reticent government resulted in strengthened relationships between lesbians and gay men, as lesbians became the unsung heroes of the 1980s and 1990s by establishing health care clinics and organizations fighting AIDS, their efforts were not enough.⁴⁵ Many men left the gay scene altogether, moving out of the queer neighborhoods. Too many others contracted HIV/AIDS, and hundreds of thousands died. Gay men in cities across the United States who helped to establish the gay neighborhoods and commercial areas passed away, leading to a decline in both the patrons and owners of gay businesses.⁴⁶ The HIV/AIDS epidemic

42 Knopp, “Some Theoretical Implications of Gay Involvement,” 342.

43 Knopp, “Some Theoretical Implications of Gay Involvement,” 342. Charles Nero, “Why are the Gay Ghettos White?,” in *Black Queer Studies: A Critical Anthology* eds. Patrick E. Johnson and Mae Henderson (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2005), 232.

44 Geurtsen, 143.

45 Casey, 280-81.

46 Geurtsen, 146. As of 2011, 648,459 people had died due to HIV/AIDS in the United States, and there were more than 1.2 million people living with HIV/AIDS. Unfortunately, HIV infection rates are increasing among young men who have sex with men. “HIV in the United States: At a Glance,” *Center for Disease Control and Prevention*, last modified November 25, 2014, last accessed January 24, 2015, <http://www.cdc.gov/hiv/statistics/basics/ata glance.html>.

resulted in the constriction and reorganization of gay space, a phenomenon that is still not fully understood and remains understudied today.

Downtown Philadelphia

The primary gay neighborhood in Philadelphia is known as the Gayborhood. The Gayborhood is located in the Center City neighborhood of Washington West, a



Figure 2.1. Pamphlet Displaying Current Day Gayborhood from VisitPhilly.com

little to the south of City Hall, west of Old City, and to the east of Rittenhouse Square. The neighborhood is heavily concentrated between Chestnut Street to the north and Pine Street to the south, and Juniper Street to the west and 12th Street to the east.⁴⁷ The neighborhood dates from the post-war period and has grown since.

Today new queer spaces are developing in gentrifying areas of Fishtown, South Philadelphia, and West Philadelphia. Prior to modern day clustering of LGBT communities, studies show that between the 1940s and 1990s neighborhoods with

high concentrations of LGBTQ people have included Center City, Germantown, and

47 Philadelphia Gay Tourism Caucus "Welcome to the Gayborhood," *Philadelphia Magazine*, http://c526372.r72.cf0.rackcdn.com/PM_Map.pdf.

West Philadelphia. The location of Philadelphia's LGBTQ populations has followed the trend of other major cities by recently acquiring its own attention and attracting several scholars.

Studies on gay and lesbian populations in Philadelphia have laid the groundwork for mapping their historic locations. After the war gays and lesbians clustered in several locations in Philadelphia. Between 1950 and 1980 those geographies become more concentrated within particular neighborhoods, meaning that larger numbers of gay commercial spaces could be found within a singular geographic space, before the number of geographic areas and businesses declined in the 1980s. Gays and lesbians played and lived in clusters in Center City, South Philadelphia (home to many countercultural groups), West Philadelphia, and Germantown. Many older lesbians preferred areas distant from the center of the city like West Philadelphia and Germantown.⁴⁸ Similarly, black gay men and women tended not to live in Center City. Gay African-Americans lived in surrounding Philadelphia neighborhoods away from the center of the city.⁴⁹ Center City neighborhoods like Rittenhouse Square, Market East, Queens' Village, Society Hill, and Washington West all played a role in developing the current geographies of the gay commercial community in Philadelphia and became whiter after WWII.

Gay neighborhoods in Philadelphia, like in many cities across the country, are located in areas that have experienced cycles of prosperity and decline. Gays in Philadelphia moved into vacuums created mainly through suburbanization and urban planning. The neighborhood of Washington West, where the Gayborhood is today, and areas surrounding that neighborhood around the 1200 and 1300 blocks, especially near Locust and Chestnut, have shifted significantly in the last 130 years. Chestnut Street has long had a reputation of being one of the best shopping areas in the city.⁵⁰ In

⁴⁸ Stein, 38.

⁴⁹ Stein, 35.

⁵⁰ Ed. Russell F. Weigley. *Philadelphia: A 300-Year History* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1982), 714.

the 1880s the neighborhood, though partially residential, had successful retail businesses selling furniture, house supplies, European cigars, musical instruments, and groceries. Also located on this block around the turn of the century were the Presbyterian Board of Publications, the Center of the Pennsylvania Episcopal Dioceses, and later the Garrick Theater.⁵¹ At this time Philadelphia was still one of the nation's largest manufacturing cities and remained competitive as an industrial center.

Determined to maintain a thriving downtown, the Republican-led government encouraged private companies to modernize the city core. Telephone companies, railroad lines, and land speculators invested in downtowns. City Hall, Wanamaker Department Store, and other new buildings replaced residential homes and old businesses in the neighborhood. Between 1880 and 1910, buildings erected in popular corridors of Washington West and the area just to the northwest were designed to be the most fashionable that the city could offer. Because Philadelphia was attracting diverse businesses and wealthy businessmen, Philadelphia attempted to imitate the cosmopolitan allure of New York with theaters, upscale bars, and other amenities catering to an independent socioeconomic class.

However, the rise of Philadelphia as an industrial hub could not be sustained. Gradual changes in the urban landscape indicated the decline of Philadelphia's monopoly on industries such as textiles and railroads. By 1915 many of the more socially acceptable theaters disappeared, leaving questionable entities in their place along Chestnut, Walnut, and Arch Street. Already struggling financially, the city attempted to launch a rejuvenation campaign that also failed.⁵² In the 1920s Chestnut Street and much of the area where the Gayborhood would be established became a bohemian art area, hosting jazz shows as late as the 1940s.⁵³ The contrasts between different

51 "Chestnut Street, South Side from Thirteenth to Board," *Baxter Panoramic Business Directory*, February 1880. Philadelphia Historical Commission, 11004-52.

52 Weigley, 485, 487, 536, and 602.

53 Bob Skiba, "The Roots of the Gayborhood, The Eve of A Milestone," <http://hiddencityphila.org/2014/02/the-roots-of-the-gayborhood-the-eve-of-a-milestone/>.

neighborhoods in the downtown area were often irregular, meaning that a prosperous shopping area could be located a few streets from a rowdier part of the city. Transitions were often gradual until after World War II.⁵⁴

Though Philadelphia's city center grew as in many cities after the war, the loss of financial stability allowed for less reputable commercial activity in the area where the Gayborhood would develop, such as bars that permitted prostitution, gambling, and drugs.⁵⁵ The area along the 1200 and 1300 strip on Locust Street and intersecting alley-ways like Juniper and Camac Street became home to a sex district and later the location of the earliest gay establishments in living memory in Philadelphia.⁵⁶ Bob Skiba, the unofficial Gayborhood historian and archivist at William Way Center in Philadelphia, points out that bars that catered to gays and lesbians were located on side streets such as Camac and Quince. In fact, 13th and Locust and the areas around this intersection were the roots of the Philadelphia Gayborhood.⁵⁷

The Philadelphia Gay Ghetto

Some of the oldest gay establishments in Philadelphia were born on these streets. Maxine's and Venture Inn, on the 200 block of South Street close to the Locust Strip, date to the 1930s and 1940s. Maxine's (1935) and Venture Inn (1940s) were part of the bohemian club phenomenon that grew up in this area in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Clubs like Poor Richard's Club, Sketch Club, and Franklin Inn were located in this area and remained concealed and protected during the Prohibition.⁵⁸ Because these places were in alleys considered "beyond respectable

54 Groth, 163, 203.

55 Galecki, 43. "Lurid Locust" was the name given to the red light district in downtown Philadelphia. Gaeton J. Fonzi, "Lurid Locust Street: A Shocking Report on Philadelphia's Sin Center," *Gay Philadelphia Magazine*, 1961, 18-21, 40-45. Jerry Moore, *The Lady Jai Recommended List*, c 1954, Bob Skiba, "Keeping It All in the Family," *The Philadelphia Gayborhood Guru*, December 31, 2012, last accessed January 17, 2015, <https://thegayborhoodguru.wordpress.com/category/locust-st/>.

56 Galecki, 43.

57 Bob Skiba, "The Roots of the Gayborhood, The Eve of a Milestone," <http://hiddencityphila.org/2014/02/the-roots-of-the-gayborhood-the-eve-of-a-milestone/>. See also Josh Sides, "Excavating the Postwar Sex District in San Francisco," *Journal of Urban History* Vol. 32 No. 3 (2006): 355-79.

58 Bob Skiba, "So, What's the Oldest Gay Bar in Philadelphia," July 15, 2012, last accessed March 23, 2015, <https://thegayborhoodguru.wordpress.com/tag/maxines/>.

society” that hosted both blacks and whites, queers, artists, and illegal drinking, Camac Street was the city’s equivalent to New York City’s Greenwich Village.⁵⁹ Arguably Camac Street remains at the heart of the modern day Gayborhood.

In the 1920s the hotels and theaters along Broad Street and slightly east of Locust Street, including alleyways and side streets, comprised the entertainment district, which homosexuals frequented. Despite their reputation, theaters drew high quality performers such as Ella Fitzgerald. The tea room would later become Venture Inn, which opened at 255 South Camac Street during this time. Camac Street was nicknamed the “Little Street of Clubs,” and during Prohibition it hosted several speakeasies as well as gaining a reputation for an artistic culture.⁶⁰

During the War, Maxine’s was frequented by both straight and gay soldiers. After the War many nightclubs opened up and down 12th and 13th Street, as well as on Locust, Camac, and St. James Street. These clubs were home to black performers, bohemians, and homosexuals.⁶¹ Bob Skiba notes that at this time the impact of the automobile and suburbanization played a role in who came to the city, as “negative spaces” or empty lots produced as a result of tear downs created parking for those who owned cars or commuted to the city.

The 1950s through the 1970s saw a boom in the number of LGBT sites in Philadelphia, encouraged by commodification and growth in the number of homosexuals. Locust Street from 12th to Broad Street had the most notorious clubs and bars. By the 1960s, some places within the neighborhood that catered to homosexuals were not gay owned. For example, Dewey’s Coffee Shop on 13th Street purposefully created a gay friendly atmosphere. At the same time, entertainment areas that developed after the war along Locust, Juniper, Camac, and Walnut Street around 12th and 13th Street

59 Ibid.

60 Bob Skiba, “The Little Street of Clubs,” July 15, 2012, last accessed March 2, 2015, <https://thegayborhoodguru.wordpress.com/category/camac-st/>.

61 Bob Skiba, “Nightclubbing Philly Style,” December 18, 2012, last accessed March 26, 2015, <https://thegayborhoodguru.wordpress.com/category/locust-st/>.

turned into much seedier bars and strip clubs.⁶² By the 1970s the less desirable places became targets of urban renewal and many lots on Locust's 1200 and 1300 block were razed.

Urban Revitalization and AIDS

Because the city was languishing as an urban center in the 1950s, by the 1970s Philadelphia's municipal powers voted to build major highways through Philadelphia in the hopes of bringing life back to the city.⁶³ Walter Philips and the Philadelphia Commission worked to spark urban renewal after the recognition of deindustrialization in Philadelphia following the post-war shift towards the suburbs.⁶⁴ Both Mayor Clark and Mayor Dilworth urged planning strategies to address job losses and changing city demographics in the 1950s and early 1960s.⁶⁵ The first solution was to build highways and industrial parks, as well as demolishing areas that were considered blighted.

The well-documented development project of Society Hill stands as an example of projects that significantly affected the urban landscape of queer culture in Philadelphia. The area was known as the 1940s as "Bloody Fifth Ward" because of the amount of crime, and in the 1950s the ward became a target of Ed Bacon's new urban vision. Bacon was a city planner for Philadelphia for several years, and many of his plans shaped present day Philadelphia. Like other urban planners, such as Robert Moses in New York, Bacon proposed controversial plans.⁶⁶ Using Independence Mall as a historic anchor, corporate headquarters were developed around the mall, middle-class business was encouraged in the surrounding area, and private-public relationships were established to increase the wealth of the neighborhood. Feder-

62 Bob Skiba, "Straight Snapshot: An Empty Lot That's Full of Stories," October 21, 2012, last accessed March 26, 2015, <https://thegayborhoodguru.wordpress.com/category/13th-st/>.

63 Weigley, 697.

64 Guian McKee, "Urban Deindustrialization and Local Public Policy: Industrial Renewal in Philadelphia, 1953-1976," *Journal of Policy History* Vol. 16 No. 1(2004): 68.

65 McKee, 69.

66 Heller, 117.

al funding was used for the project because private developers could not be relied on to begin the transition due to stigma attached to the neighborhoods. Wealthier classes moved in, and at the same time the communities who used to live there were displaced. The homeowners were almost all white and blacks were relocated, so the economy improved, but there was a lack of diversity.⁶⁷

In other areas near Rittenhouse Square and Washington West, low housing prices created by the vacuum of suburban flight attracted young single men and women. Some gays took up residence on Spruce, Pine, and Locust Street, while others already lived there. Gays frequented restaurants on Locust Strip and in Rittenhouse Square. Allegro, a popular restaurant and bar between 1962 and 1980, was established near Locust Strip on a small alley called Drury Lane.⁶⁸ A popular Young Men's Christian Association located on Broad and Chestnut Street was known for catering to young gay men; it rented rooms to single men and had swimming pool areas used for sex. During the mid-century urban revitalization efforts, Philadelphia authorities focused on parks, and Washington Square became known as "pervert park" by some city planners. Activist Jane Jacobs writes, "Several decades ago Washington Square became Philadelphia's pervert park, to the point where it was shunned by office lunchers and was an unmanageable vice and crime problem to park workers and police."⁶⁹ It was a place used by gay men for cruising to find sexual partners. A few pages later she writes:

The perverts who completely took over Philadelphia's Washington Square for several decades were a manifestation of the city behavior, in microcosm. They did not kill off a vital and appreciated park. They did not drive out respectable users. They moved into an abandoned place and entrenched themselves. As this is written, the unwelcome users have successfully been chased away to find other vacuums, but this act has still not supplied the park with a sufficient sequence of welcome users.⁷⁰

⁶⁷ Heller, 131-134.

⁶⁸ Stein, 43, 21, and 62.

⁶⁹ Jane Jacobs, *Death and Life of Great American Cities* (New York, Vintage, 1992), 92.

⁷⁰ Jacobs, 98.

Other areas between Spruce Street, Broad Street, and Delancey, known as the “Merry-Go-Round” and “Meat Rack,” became popular for cruising in addition to Washington Square. A number of bars, clubs, and restaurants also took shape on or near the Locust Strip. But these neighborhoods were not to survive urban renewal practices.⁷¹

The majority of Galecki’s thesis focuses on analyzing primary sources to trace how Philadelphia’s Redevelopment Authority’s approval of the use of federal funding for urban renewal programs in Washington West led to the reshaping of the gay community. This was one of several projects considered under Bacon along with the redesigning of Society Hill, Skid Row, and other areas. Galecki argues that the redevelopment by Bacon was motivated by Redevelopment Authority’s desire to increase the business district in order to expand Philadelphia’s tax base, thereby revisiting the city’s urban center while helping in some way to create new life in downtown centers, remapping geographies of many communities.⁷² Ultimately the Washington West redevelopment between 1960 and 1980 erased many “undesirables” from the neighborhood. The result was a loss of diversity in the community of bohemians, artists, prostitutes, and mixed race residents who had lived there before. Those left were gay, young, white educated professionals who could invest in the neighborhood.⁷³ Construction of hotels, the convention center, and other businesses eliminated the remnants of the entertainment district. The redevelopment moved the community east away from South Street, south out of range of City Hall, and slightly east, moving away from Rittenhouse Square.

Commodification’s Impact Before Urban Renewal

Before urban renewal policies constricted these gay communities, an effect that was further compounded in the 1980s and 1990s with conservative politics and

71 Skidmore, Owings, and Merrill. *Market Street East General Neighborhood Renewal Plan*. Philadelphia, PA: Skidmore, Owings, and Merrill, 1966.

72 Galecki, 52.

73 “Young Gay Professionals Finding the Good Life in ‘Wash West,’” *Philadelphia Evening Bulletin* 10, May 10, 1981.

the outbreak of HIV/AIDS, Philadelphian homosexuals enjoyed a short period of time where the community grew. Though they were still social outcasts, homosexuals had a considerable grip on real estate in Center City, along with the support of a consumer society that reinforced economic investments in commercial establishments at the city center. With this new power the number of commercial spaces catering to gay men proliferated. Mass relocation transformed these neighborhoods in the following decades. Growth in the 1960s led to the height of commercial space owned by and catering to gay men by the 1970s. In addition to a critical mass of gay men and women moving to the urban core during the 1960s, Philadelphia, aware of the vice problem downtown, created campaigns to clean up the city as mentioned previously. Several areas of the downtown were revitalized, cleared, demolished, and gentrified.

Gay space moved beyond Locust Street and the narrowly defined space of Washington West. Growth occurred both to the east and west of Broad Street, and the number of spaces around Rittenhouse Square increased. There were gay establishments a stone's throw from City Hall in 1975.⁷⁴ In fact, most of the types of commercial establishments that existed in American gayborhoods between the 1960s and present day were represented in Philadelphia.

There were bars, clubs, baths, bookstores, restaurants, coffeehouses, community centers, and other gathering spaces throughout Center City between the 1960s and 1980s. Some of the most popular were Giovanni's Room, Venture Inn, Bike Stop, and Allegro's. Later other bars came onto the scene including Woody's, the longest continuously operating gay bar in Philadelphia. Many other clubs, bars, and theaters would establish themselves for a brief period of time before relocating or closing. According to Galecki's analysis of gay commercial space in Philadelphia, businesses serving queers thrived during this time. Out of over 300 noted sites from Galecki's study (and a few added in this study), more than 150 existed at one point during the

⁷⁴ Bob Skiba, *Gayborhood* 1975.

1970s with the other half existing prior to the 1970s or from the 1980s to the present day. Furthermore, the population worked to gentrify the area, and by the end of the 1960s Center City had become the second most educated, home-owning, and wealthy neighborhood in the city. Center City moved up to the wealthiest neighborhood by the 1980s.⁷⁵

The neighborhoods and commercial spaces established by the gay community in the 1970s [Figure 2.2.] declined by the end of the 1980s [Figure 2.3.], for two reasons. First, rising urban renewal projects in Washington West, South Street, and other areas in Center City drove up real estate prices, pushing many poorer gay men out of the neighborhood. Second, the onset of the HIV/AIDS epidemic scared gay men who frequented and owned the commercial sites. In addition to rampant fear that scared many men away from the community, an equal or even larger number contracted the disease. The decline of the gay male population due to HIV/AIDS meant that there were fewer gay men to frequent and own sites.⁷⁶ Several gay men interviewed for this thesis indicated that as friends and loved ones became ill, businesses shut down, and some men left the gay scene out of fear while others had to care for the sick and dying. The impact of AIDS combined with urban renewal projects contributed to the redrawing of the gay landscape in Philadelphia. Of the spaces previously owned by gays during the height of sexual liberation, an untold number have been redeveloped, sold, or are no longer are part of the gay community. Though many gay men wanted to keep these spaces within the community, gentrification, high real estate prices, and lack of community support meant that many sites were lost and the boundaries of the Gayborhood continued to shrink until a resurgence in the early 2000s.⁷⁷

75 Stein, 34.

76 Galecki, 46.

77 Galecki, 55. This has yet to be studied. The Gayborhood is seemingly on the rise, yet still faces issues such as high rent, discriminatory violence, and a disorganized queer voice.

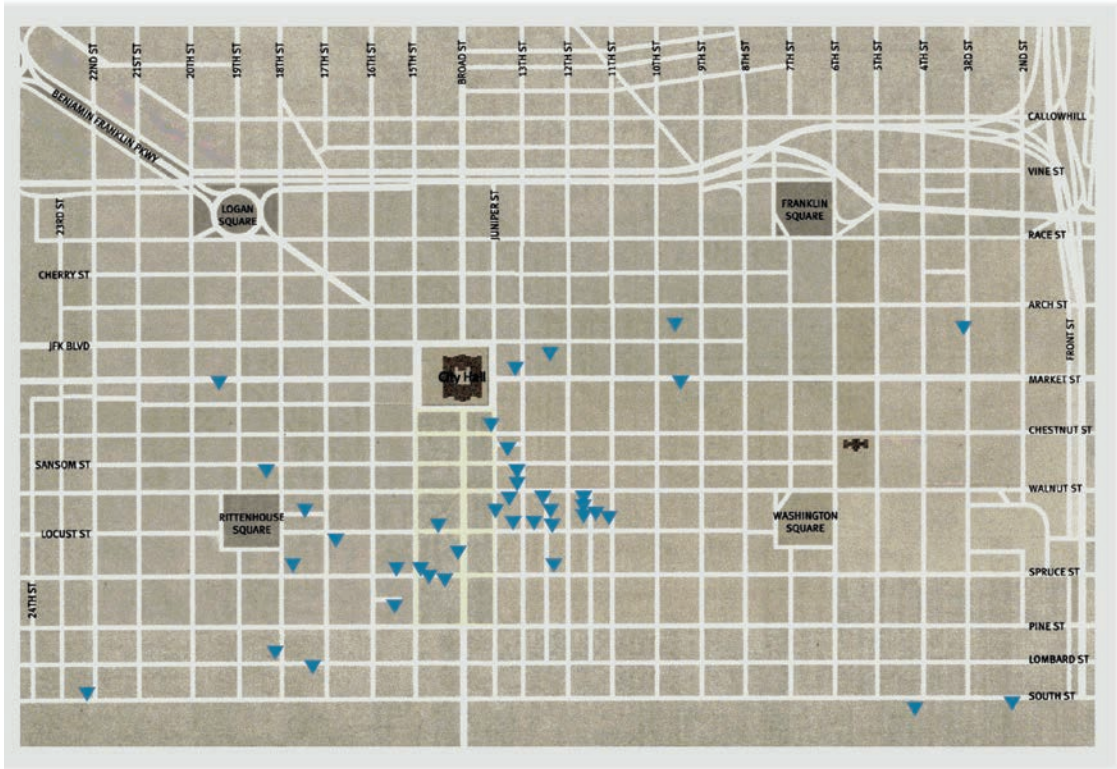


Figure 2.2. Map of Gayborhood Commercial Spaces 1975 Courtesy of Bob Skiba, William Way Archivist

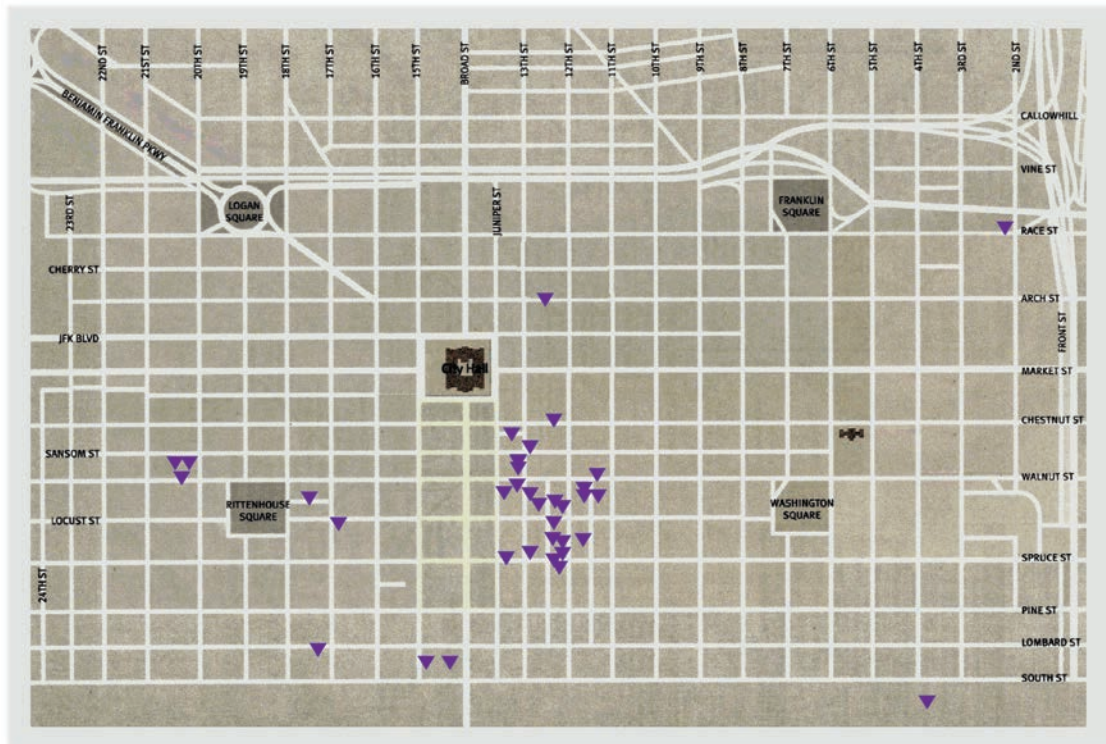


Figure 2.3. Map of Gayborhood Commercial Space in 1995 Courtesy of Bob Skiba, William Way Archivist

Conclusion

Like many other cities, Philadelphia experienced a decline in prosperity and population beginning around the turn of the century and lasting through the 1950s. City planning and social marginalization allowed gay Philadelphians to claim and use space as their own. Bathhouses existed within the boundaries of gay space created by queers. The next chapter will explore the number, typology, localities, and history of bathhouses.

Philadelphia's gay ghetto is not unlike other American gayborhoods. Similar patterns of growth were triggered by similar social and economic trends including suburbanization, consumerism, and conservative backlash. The urban core of Philadelphia tended to have the most vibrant gay community, though the inhabitants remain mostly white, educated, middle-class gay men. Though gay men established gay neighborhoods, these geographies changed as they were impacted by urban planning policies, social practices, and economic trends. However, the oldest gay establishments in Philadelphia still remain in the heart of the Gayborhood, despite redistribution of the geographies of the gay commercial landscape.

The Death and Life of Great American Bathhouses: A Social History and Analysis of Common Design Types

Business has not been good lately for bathhouses, the urban meeting places for gay men who enjoy steam rooms and saunas or getting blowjobs from complete strangers in them.

- Brian Moylan, 2015

Introduction

If you search the internet for “gay bathhouse,” you are likely to come across online gay guides in cities like New York, San Francisco, Los Angeles, and maybe your own geographic area. You will also find articles in magazines like *OUT*, *Advocate*, and *Vice* addressing a nostalgic recollection of what bathhouses once were for the gay community. At their height bathhouses were hangouts for gay men. There were famous baths and chains of bathhouses across the country. Club Baths had nearly forty baths in cities across the United States from San Francisco to Indianapolis.¹ Club Body, another familiar chain, had bathhouses in Philadelphia and New York. There were famous baths like The Continental in New York City and Rich Street in San Francisco. Today, however, there are few baths in major cities compared to the heyday of nearly a half century ago. There are two currently operating in Philadelphia, a handful in Portland, Houston, and Washington, D.C., and a dozen or so in New York, San Francisco, and Miami. Some journalists estimate that there were over 200 bathhouses across the United States in the 1970s and as few as 90 by the 1990s.²

Historically bathhouses tended to be located in gay ghettos or near the periphery of these spaces. Advertisements ranged from subtle to explicit images of partially nude men, placed strategically in gay guides and areas that would be noticed by men who sought sex with men. Bathhouses also tended to have a standard floor plan so that visitors could expect the same protocol in different cities. Modern bathhouses

1 Jay Barmman, “Gallery: San Francisco Gay Bathhouse History, in Fliers [NSFW],” *SFist*, March 26, 2013, last accessed January 27, 2015, http://sfist.com/2013/03/26/gallery_san_francisco_gay_bathhouse.php#photo-2.

2 Matt Hamilton, “Gay Bathhouses Nationwide Face Uncertain Future.”

have similar plans to twentieth century government funded bathhouses and genteel baths from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. This can be attributed to the fact that there were no spaces designed specifically as gay bathhouses until the middle half of the twentieth century, due to the lack of a cohesive gay community until after WWII. Gay men relied on existing places for gay sex, appropriating them as gay spaces or operating on the down-low to avoid clashes with the law.

This chapter discusses the geographic boundaries of bathhouses in the United States, the history of gay bathhouses, and the progression of bathhouse forms. It will provide the relevant social history of bathhouses in the United States in order to inform subsequent chapters' discussions of how these buildings should be treated by the preservation community. This section's focus on location and internal design will support the survey and conclusions drawn in Chapters 4 and 5.

A Chronicle of Baths

To date there is no comprehensive scholarly study of gay bathhouses in American history. The most substantial scholarship is that of Allan Berubé, whose framework will be used to better understand the development of baths. However, enough information and firsthand accounts exist to conclude that bathhouses were brought from Europe to the United States. This early type of bath was known as the "ordinary bathhouse." Ordinary bathhouses provided bathing places as well as relief from summer heat. These institutions also provided a semi-recreational atmosphere, as they could be attached to genteel spas and have bars and parlors for fraternizing.³ This model preceded many of the public bath movements in urban areas. Typical patrons included landed gentry and the urban wealthy and middling classes who could afford a day at the spa.

William Swaim, owner of pharmaceutical enterprises in Philadelphia, made

³ Allan Berubé, "The History of the Gay Bathhouse," 36.



Figure 3.1. Swaim's Bathhouse from Library Company
a small fortune by selling patent medicine.⁴ He used his considerable wealth to construct the Swaim Bathhouse within an existing mansion in the late 1820s on the northeast corner of Seventh Street and Sansom (then known as George Street). The bathhouse was an adapted brick building of three and a half stories. It was complete with separate bathing areas for men and women and a swimming pool.⁵

Men and women entered from separate entrances, and collectively the building had between forty-four and fifty baths, made of “tin-plated copper and Italian marble.”⁶ The facility was highly praised by world travelers who drew comparisons

⁴ The druggists of this period were selling products that were in high demand and possibly questionable. They patented these medicines and accrued large fortunes.

⁵ Weigley, 290.

⁶ The Library Company of Philadelphia Digital Collection, last accessed January 27, 2015, http://lcp-dams.librarycompany.org:8881/R/?func=dbin-jump-full&object_id=64797&local_base=GEN01

between the Swaim bath and those in Paris and London.⁷ It was also highly praised by Philadelphians. One early guidebook author noted, “This is the most extensive and complete bathing establishment in the city. It is provided with every suitable accommodation, and is in all respects deserving of liberal patronage which it has received since its foundation in 1829.”⁸ Other bathhouses included Harmer’s Bath House on Third Street near Arch Street and another near Second Street and Arch.

Though Swaim’s was called a public bathhouse, it was privately built, as were other bathhouses at the time. Before Republican efforts to assimilate masses of immigrants into urban areas in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, public establishments were not necessarily governmentally funded, since “public” had a different definition than it does today. These places were organized around customers of an upper class with very particular notions of behavior.⁹ The patrons of these businesses (such as bathhouses, clubs, theaters, gardens, and restaurants) tended to be middle to upper-middle class citizens who could afford such luxuries, fostering inherently exclusive environments. These bathhouses differed from the public bathhouses that were built as a result of a sense of civic duty toward the massive influx of immigrants at the end of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Berubé identifies “favorite spots” as a second style or type of bathhouse emerging between the late nineteenth century and first quarter of the twentieth century. Favorite spots were places where men gathered in a homogenous environment that

7 R. A. Smith, *Philadelphia as it is in 1852: Being a Correct Guide to All Public Buildings, Literary, Scientific, and Beneficent Institutions; and Places of Amusement; Remarkable Objects; Manufactories; Commercial Warehouses; and Wholesale and Retail Stores in Philadelphia and its Vicinity* (Philadelphia: Lindsay and Blakiston), 77. John Sanderson “Philadelphia Beauty” *Journal Waldie’s Select Circulating Library and Journal of Polite Literature* Vol. 16 No. 2 (1841): 336. Different sources site different numbers of baths and showers, accounting for the range.

8 H.S. Tanner, *A Geographical, Historical and Statistical View of the Central or Middle United States; Containing Accounts of Early Settlement; Nature Features; Progress of Improvement; Form of Government; Civil Divisions and Internal Improvements of Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, The District of Columbia and Parts of New York and Other Adjoining States: Together with particular description of the Cities, Towns, and villages; Public Building; Objects of Curiosity; Literary, Scientific, and other Institutions, &c* (Philadelphia: H. Tanner Junior, 1841), 127.

9 See Wilson, *The City Beautiful Movement*.

could facilitate sexual male-male relationships, but did not necessitate them. Favorite spots could be found in public baths, Young Men's Christian Associations (YMCAs), certain hotels, and private baths. YMCAs bordered Philadelphia's emergent Gayborhood as hotels built around the turn of the century with baths in them. These included the Bellevue-Stratford, which opened in 1904 at 200 South Broad Street. According to popular lore as told by many men interviewed, the Bellevue had a health spa that was frequented by many gay men through the middle of the twentieth century.

Common advertisements in gay travel guides, starting in the 1960s, listed baths under various names. The Damron guides are one of the world's bestsellers in gay guides, with specific books for various cities, genders, and sexualities. A businessman first published this guide in 1964 under the name Bob Damron, and since then it has been known as the first guide written by gay men for gay men. These address books tend to be pocket size and non-descript.¹⁰ Several other address book companies followed suit, helping gay men find gay bars, clubs, and baths. Bathhouses could be listed under baths or under the headers of spas, gyms, or men's clubs. Many guides noted whether the bath was gay owned, as well as if it hosted a mixed gay-straight crowd or a predominantly gay crowd and had young or older patrons. Many also indicated how popular each bath was by placing a star next to the address. The Back Street Baths located at the corner of Chancellor and Camac, though short lived, was highlighted as a popular place for a young collegiate crowd.¹¹

Because favorite spots developed from the public baths, it is important to trace the development of Philadelphia's government funded baths. The city's concern with hygiene rose from fear of the spread of disease in the summer months. Philadelphia's notoriously acrid summers combined with rampant spread of diseases like Yellow Fever made it an unpleasant summer location. In the eighteenth and nineteenth cen-

¹⁰ "Damron Address Book aka Damron Guides," *History of Gay and Lesbian Life in Milwaukee, Wisconsin*, last accessed March 27, 2015, hgllmw.org. It should be noted that Bob Damron may be a pseudonym used in order to protect the identity of the author and publisher.

¹¹ Bob Damron, *Bob Damron's Address Book* (San Francisco: Bob Damron Enterprises, 1984), 181.

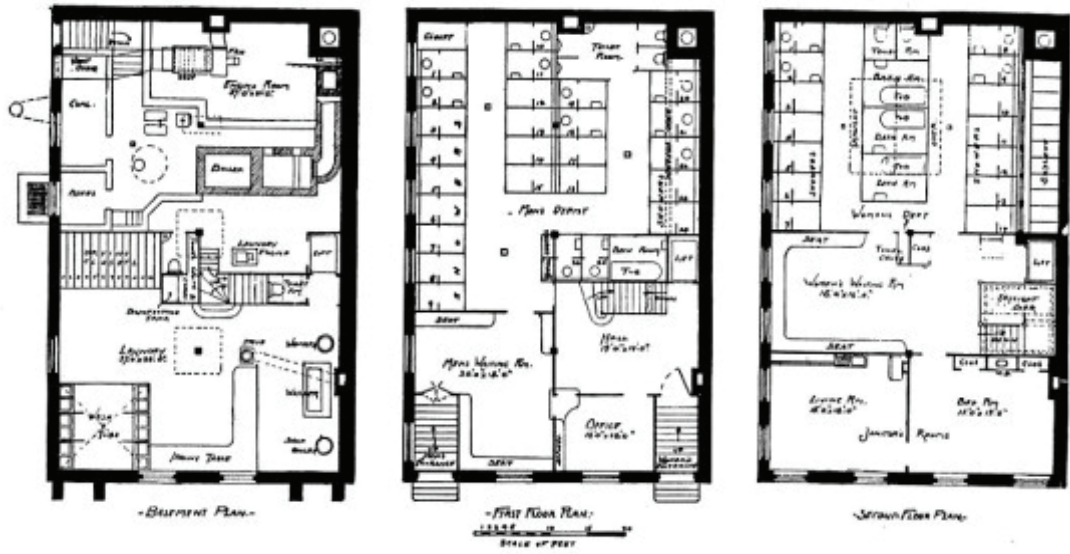


PLATE 161—GASKILL STREET BATH, PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA

Figure 3.2. Floor Plans of Gaskills Baths from U.S. Labor Department



Figure 3.3. Photo of Tacony Public Bath from PhillyHistory.com

turies, wealthy denizens would flee to rural areas outside the city in hopes of fresh air. The poor were left to fend for themselves. As early as 1848 some Philadelphians urged the city to construct bathhouses for the poor “with a special rate with the municipal water company” that would subsidize baths for mainly poor immigrant and black communities in Philadelphia.¹²

By the end of the nineteenth century, Philadelphians believed that a healthy individual was a clean one. Ideas of cleanliness, order, and health originated from germ theory, which stated that diseases were carried between people, animals, and things via microorganisms. The eradication of these germs would lead to healthier living. Therefore, a clean environment sought to mitigate germs.¹³ However, public baths were not necessarily a direct extension of the germ theory movement because by the era of public baths academic experts, medical bodies, and city officials denied the credibility of germ theory, but promoted public health infrastructure.¹⁴ While only six baths were built in Philadelphia, they were widely used, mostly during the summer months. The Gaskill Street Baths, Wood Street Bath, and Tacony Bathhouse were built in working-class neighborhoods like Southwark, Kensington, and Northern Liberties, serving communities with many immigrants and blacks.¹⁵ Similar to the earlier genteel baths, there were separate entrances for men and women. In certain baths men and women washed on separate days. Despite their overall success, concerns rose early on when the baths were used more frequently in the summer months as places of recreation to escape the heat, when they were intended to instill patterns of good

12 David Glassberg, “The Design of Reform: The Public Bath Movement in America,” *American Studies* Vol. 20 No. 2 (Fall 1979): 7.

13 Mervyn Susser and Zena Stein, *Eras in Epidemiology: The Evolution of Ideas* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 109-123.

14 Richard A Pizzi, “Apostles of Cleanliness,” *Modern Drug Discovery* Vol. 5 No. 5 (May 2002): 51-55. See also *Sickness and Health in America: Readings in the History of Medicine and Public Health*; Leavitt, J. W., Numbers, R. L., Eds.; University of Wisconsin Press: Madison, WI, 1985 and Melosi, M. V. *The Sanitary City: Urban Infrastructure in America from Colonial Times to the Present* (Johns Hopkins University Press: Baltimore, 2000).

15 Mandell, “31.



Figure 3.4. Baths on Walnut Street from PhillyHistory.com

hygiene year round.¹⁶

A key feature of the public bathhouse was strict moral oversight instituted by city government agencies. Often police or city officials acted as attendants. The architecture itself informed behavior as well. Shower stalls were for individual use, with one shower per person per visit. Despite attempts to curb sexual promiscuity, men seeking sex with men found sexual partners at the city's baths, especially those who could not afford to go to the more lavish Turkish and Russian baths, whose owners protected their clientele by paying off police. The protection given through bribing law enforcement came with the freedom to not worry about arrest or exposure, which

¹⁶ Mandell, 31. See also Glassberg, 11.

could lead to alienation and losing one's job.¹⁷

The public bathhouse fell out of favor by the 1930s as many more apartments had plumbing, meaning that more families had their own bathrooms and showers. Furthermore, the Great Depression diminished cities' ability to pay for municipal operations like baths that had been on the decline.¹⁸

Turkish and Russian baths, which could be found in New York and in areas of Philadelphia, were more amenable to gay men. They were respectable, fashionable, private, and most importantly offered more services than did public baths. Chauncey writes about two popular early types of gay bathhouses. One type had a concentrated gay clientele, but mostly served straight patrons who "tolerated" the homosexual activity. The other type targeted men who sought sex with men, intentionally cultivating a gay environment. Excluding non-homosexual patrons and catering to gay men was "significant to the development of gay society."¹⁹ Another type of bath not explicitly described in detail by Chauncey was the Jewish bathhouse, which in many cases became populated by gay men, especially as urban Jews assimilated to American culture or became upwardly mobile and moved to the suburbs. The development of this type of bath was often linked to the lower priced hotels and businesses that discriminated against Jews (through the 1960s) as well as art cultures. However, by the 1960s marginal neighborhoods home to many gay commercial areas had been redlined, bulldozed, and developed in many cities.²⁰

St. Mark's Bath in New York and the Camac Baths on Camac Street in Philadelphia began as Jewish shvitzes before being appropriated by gays for sexual outings. Christopher Isherwood, a popular gay British author, visited the Camac Baths in the early twentieth century. He wrote in his journal: "The others went back by a late train

17 Renner, 520. Chauncey, 208-10.

18 Mandell, 31.

19 Chauncey, 209-211.

20 Groth, 64 and 269.

to New York: Pete and I spent the night at our favorite haunt, the Camac Baths.”²¹ Other types of baths also existed in the city, such as the aforementioned baths at the Bellevue-Stratford Hotel that operated from 1904 until 1976. Some popular locations also included Turkish and Russian Baths at 1104 South Walnut Street between 1891 and the 1930s, Weiner’s Turkish Bath at 511-3 South 3rd Street, and spas in many local hotels. The life span of these institutions varied. The 12th Street baths operated from 1905 through the 1970s, while many baths in Center City at the end of the 19th century operated for less than a year. Several longtime private baths existed on Walnut Street through 1927 until they were demolished to construct the new Forrest Theater.²²

The final type of bath with which this thesis is concerned is the modern gay bathhouse. Modern gay bathhouses offered protected places for gay men to have sex starting in the 1950s. Berubé attributes the growth of the gay bathhouse, specifically in San Francisco, to WWII. During the war and shortly thereafter, large port cities saw a spike in establishments catering to servicemen before they left for the Pacific Arena and when they came home. Looking for a good time, service men cruised the safer bath areas instead of bars and parks.²³

Post-War Changes

The 1970s and the prevalence of American capitalist ideals impacted the bathhouses and how they catered to gay men using new technologies and cultural trends to attract more patrons. The invention of the videotape in the 1970s allowed for gay sex videos to be shown on large screens, which became a widespread feature in many baths thereafter.²⁴ Other baths featured live artist performances and concerts. Bette Midler and Barry Manilow performed in front of large crowds at the Continental

21 Christopher Hitchens, *Unacknowledged Legislation: Writers in the Public Sphere* (New York: Verso, 2002), 366.

22 Bob Skiba, “Lincoln, Lincoln, I’ve Been Thinkin’,” *The Philadelphia Gayborhood Guru*, August 27, 2014, last accessed January 27, 2015, <https://thegayborhoodguru.wordpress.com/>.

23 Berubé, *History of Gay Baths*, 38.

24 Berubé, *History of Gay Baths*, 40.

in New York, earning Midler the nickname Bathhouse Betty.²⁵ The culture of these bathhouses was campy and fun, giving a home to many men who had been rejected by their families at a time when being gay was less acceptable than it is today. Baths acted as community centers, often hosting holiday and costume parties.

The filmographer, activist, and photographer Frank Melleno captured the life of gay men during the 1970s when he was a student at San Francisco State College. Gary Freeman posthumously organized Melleno's photographs, including a recent Polaroid exhibit, and published them in the *Advocate* as the Fair Oaks Project.²⁶

The pictures capture the life of the bathhouses beyond the sex that took place there, showing the important role that they played for the gay community. At the end of the 1970s some baths began offering venereal disease testing. Towards the beginning of the 1980s, bodybuilding became increasingly important to the gay community, leading to the installation of gyms and workout rooms in baths.²⁷ A clear shift is visible in the advertisements in gay travel guides. Fewer men have an older rugged look, and more have a muscular physique, hairless bodies, and youthful appearance.

Following a surge in popularity, bathhouses took the stage as sites of national contestation in the 1980s. The onset of the HIV/AIDS epidemic resulted in fierce battles among and between health officials, government officials, and gay men. Bathhouses already struggling to attract clientele witnessed plummeting rates in 1984 because many men left the gay scene due to fear or infection.²⁸ Activists, many of them anti-gay, stepped in to urge city health authorities in cities like San Francisco and New York to close baths, arguing that they were public health hazards. Opponents of clos-

25 Bette Midler-Continental Baths Concert (1971), *Youtube*, April 29, 2014, last accessed January 27, 2015, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UOrzpQeJyKI>.

26 Fair Oaks Project in the Lesli-Lohman Museum. See also Mark Thompson, "Fair Oaks Projects," *The Advocate*, June 28, 2014, <http://www.advocate.com/arts-entertainment/art/photography/2014/06/28/photos-bathhouse-history-lesson?page=0,1>. This is an online component to the *Advocate*, which is published in hardcopy and digitally. Some features, such as this one, only appear in the digital format, so in this case there is no volume to include in the citation.

27 Berubé, *History of Gay Baths*, 41.

28 Disman, 74.

ing the baths argued that such a move would violate gay civil liberties.²⁹ Many men in other cities had already started going to baths to promote safe sex. One Philadelphia advocate remembers going to Club Philadelphia in the early days of the AIDS crisis to teach owners and employees to offer condoms on site, noting that posters promoting safe sex were on the walls.

By the end of 1984 San Francisco had closed most of the baths in the city, even though many were already complying with public health regulations by offering condoms and promoting safer sex practices. The following year New York had a similar crisis. New York state laws in 1985 led to local regulation that closed most baths in Manhattan, leaving baths in other areas of the state open. Philadelphia baths remained open in the 1980s; new ones even opened and were popular despite the fears of HIV/AIDS.³⁰ The *Philadelphia Inquirer* noted that the contemporary baths had a subdued atmosphere compared to the “freewheeling fun” of the pre-AIDS era and that orgy rooms that once had seen up to 100 men at a time were now empty.³¹

Politics and the Modern Day Bathhouse

Bathhouse history from the 1990s until today remains largely understudied. Though information has become more accessible, academic work on bathhouses remains focused on health initiatives related to sexual orientation and risk factors related to contracting HIV/AIDS. Scholarship in the 1990s focused on gay history, queer theory, and art. One review of a queer art exhibit in New York that was intended to celebrate same-sex relationships devalued the role of bathhouses and bars in the 1970s, saying, “We’re not spared an excursion into the hedonism of the gay-male bar and bathhouse scene of the 1970s, complete with psychedelic-drug menus and advertisements for S/M. But on display also is a century’s worth of framed portraits of same-

29 Disman, 76.

30 Disman, 113.

31 Donald C. Drake and Loretta Tofani, “AIDS: A DAY WITH A GLOBAL KILLER”, *Inquirer*, October 22, 1987.

sex couples, both male and female, identified and anonymous.”³²

Some modern reports have focused on differences in the clientele of different baths, noting that bathhouses tended to be segregated based on race.³³ Public health advocates and research physicians also acknowledged that many bathhouse patrons used drugs and that most men in bathhouses preferred not to use condoms, lest the passion of the moment be lost.³⁴ The absence of bathhouses in the 1990s compared to earlier decades caused newspapers to speculate on the reasons that bathhouses closed, especially in San Francisco.³⁵ In Philadelphia the mayor, Edward “Ed” Rendell, called for stricter monitoring of bathhouses. Some city officials cited bathhouse owners as partially responsible for the continued rise in HIV/AIDS cases in Philadelphia due to the failure to enforce safer sex protocols on site.³⁶ Despite the drop in the number of baths and bath goers, some books and articles appeared that talked about the history of baths in the late 1990s. In addition, guides for men thinking of going to the baths and some advertising did continue.³⁷

In recent years the Internet has replaced gay guides in helping men seeking sex with other men attain nearly instant anonymous sex. However, only major cities have bathhouses and only very large ones like Los Angeles, Houston, New York, and Philadelphia have more than one.³⁸ Bathhouses now have their own websites showing pictures of their facilities, upcoming events, and prices. Of the two currently operating baths in Philadelphia, Sansom Street Gym’s slogan reads, “Gym & Baths-where men

32 Julia Klein, “Perspectives on the Modern Gay Movement,” *Philadelphia Inquirer*, June 23, 1994.

33 Matt Mutchler, Trista Bingham, Miguel Chion, Richard Jenkins, Lee Klosinski, and Gine Secura, 226.

34 Mutchler et al., 232.

35 Disman, 116.

36 Larry Copeland, “SEX BUSINESSES TO GET TOUGHER ANTI-AIDS RULES MAYOR RENDELL CALLED FOR BETTER MONITORING AND ENFORCEMENT. THE GOAL IS TO STOP THE SPREAD OF AIDS,” *Inquirer*, November 17, 1992.

37 Ralph Bolton, Jon Vincke, and Rudolf Mak, “Gay Baths Revisited” *CLQ*, Vol. 1 No. (1994): 255-273.

Kyle Madison, “An Introduction to the Baths.” *Steam: A Quarterly Journal for Men* Vol. 3 No. 1 (1995): 100-2. Martin Weinberg and Colin J. Williams, “Gay Baths and the Social Organization of Impersonal Sex,” 164-81 in Martin P. Levine ed. *Gay Men: The Sociology of Male Homosexuality* (New York: Harper Row, 1979).

38 Bryant Ashley Hudson, Gerardo A. Okhuysen, “Not with a Ten-Foot Pole: Core Stigma, Stigma Transfer, and Improbable Persistence of Men’s Bathhouses,” *Organization Science* 20 (1) (2009):136.

meet men,” while Club Philadelphia proclaims, “Stay safe-Best location in Philly for men to meet men.”³⁹ Baths also continue to be the center of attention for public health concerns such as the treatment of HIV and other STDs as well as drug addiction. Several recent deaths at both Sansom Street Gym and Club Philadelphia have worsened the reputation of gay baths in Philadelphia.⁴⁰ The deaths at each of the clubs appear to have been related to methamphetamine, a popular drug used in East Coast bathhouses today, replacing the popularity of poppers and marijuana in the 1960s and 1970s.⁴¹ Furthermore, the clubs have experienced incidences of fire such as the one that temporarily closed the Club Body Center on Chancellor Street, which later reopened as Club Philadelphia.⁴²

New efforts by the gay community to memorialize historic venues through images and exhibits have sparked nostalgia about the baths. Recent art exhibits exemplify the growing need to express memories about bathhouse culture. More and more blogs have appeared online reminiscing about bathhouses, including the blog of Bob Skiba, the unofficial Philadelphia Gayborhood historian. An independent film that came out in 2013, *Continental*, shows the private life of the bathhouse in the 1970s. Many gay men acknowledge that the popularity of bathhouses and bars is on the decline, especially with the growth of smartphone location-based applications like Grindr that help men find dates and hook-ups in their area. Meanwhile, some cities have written context statements addressing the importance of the built environment for

39 Club Philadelphia, last accessed January 28, 2015, http://www.clubphilly.com/club_philly/welcome.html and Sansom Street Gym, last accessed January 28, 2015, <http://www.sansomstreetgym.com/>.

40 Victor Fiorillo, “Coroner: Recent Gay Bathhouse Deaths Were Drug Related,” *Philadelphia Magazine*, June 26, 2014, last accessed January 28, 2015, <http://www.phillymag.com/g-philly/2014/06/26/gay-bathhouse-deaths-philadelphia-drug-related-sansom-street-gym-club-philadelphia/>. See also Josh Middleton, “Man Found Dead in Gayborhood Bathhouse,” *Philadelphia Magazine*, March 18, 2014, last accessed January 28, 2015, <http://www.phillymag.com/g-philly/2014/03/18/man-found-dead-gayborhood-bathhouse/>.

41 Lecture by Kyle M Kampman, MD, “Cocaine and Stimulants,” Department of Psychiatry and the Perelman School of Medicine, April 3, 2015.

42 PGN Staff, “Top Stories in 2012: A Year of History Makers,” *Philadelphia Gay News*, December 27, 2012.

queer communities, but most will be published in the second half of 2015 or later.⁴³ Thus it is more important than ever that preservationists consider how to address this part of gay life.

Bathhouse Design

While the baths in the United States were used to stave off illness prior to the nineteenth century, in the twentieth century baths were used as an assimilation tool for the masses of immigrants. Early baths originated from European designs based on idealized Ancient Roman baths. In the eighteenth century it was rare to have institutional bathing in the United States. Some sites like the springs in Chester and Bucks County attracted wealthy visitors from Philadelphia.⁴⁴ By the 1820s there were several baths in the colonies in larger cities like Philadelphia, New York, and Boston. Public baths originated in Europe at the same time that private baths were being constructed in the United States. Paris and London both based their structures on Roman models. The aim of these baths was to provide as many bathing units as possible for the working class, while still appealing to a certain standard of luxury. Features included sex-segregated spaces with tubs and showers. Men's areas were typically larger than those for women, as it was assumed that more men than women would bathe. Baths also included spaces for socializing such as the club room, bar, or lounge area. Individual spaces were available for bathing and showering, offering more privacy. Finally, the space in many European baths was divided based on class, unlike in the Roman baths.⁴⁵

Typically baths had a check in point where patrons would pay a nominal fee for access. In public baths of the twentieth century, patrons were allocated towels

43 Shayne Watson is an academic studying the LGBTQ history of San Francisco. She noted that there was little information on bathhouses. Watson wrote the bathhouse section for the LGBTQ context statement, which she noted would not be published until 2015. Shayne Watson, Email to Grey Pierce, December 5, 2014.

44 Harold Eberlien, "When Society First Took a Bath, Philadelphia," *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* Vol. 67 No. 1 (Jan. 1943): 32.

45 Renner, 507.

and a ticket with a number on it. They proceeded to locker room areas to remove their pedestrian garb before being corralled into a waiting area. From there patrons waited for their ticket number to be announced. Once their tickets were collected, patrons were assigned a shower. Soap was usually provided and the water would run for about five minutes. Once finished, the client would get dressed and return the towels to the laundry facility. In the case of using facilities for swimming, public baths required monitoring, through patrons could move about more freely in the showers. In private baths, once the fee was paid, clientele had free range of the facility for a certain amount of time. In between they might visit the café or sit in a lounge area. Similar progressions through different areas of the facility were the basis of patterns of movement in the gay baths later in the century, with the obvious addition of explicit sexual activity.

Baths such as Swaim's bathhouse in the United States served the upper classes, so the architecture was more high style. Gender segregation was an indication of the classes that the baths served, as were the imported Italian marble baths.⁴⁶ The Swaim bathhouse was created from a pre-existing structure. Like its predecessors in Europe, the bath had two separate entrances, one for men and one for women. Furthermore, there were more accommodations offered to men than women. The bathhouse had a lounge type area for men to gather and socialize, suggesting that even in its earliest iterations the bathhouse was a center of social life for men.

Public bathhouses, compared to earlier gentleman's baths like Swaim's, were designed to be efficient. The goal of the public baths was to bathe and shower as many working-class persons as possible in a single day.⁴⁷ The juxtaposition of the interior and exterior of the buildings called attention to the social intentions of their funders, who were wealthy men and women. The opulent exteriors of public bathhouses

⁴⁶ Phoebe Prime, "Old Philadelphia Days and Doings," *History Quarterly Digital Archives* Vol. 3 No. 4 (October 1940): 82.

⁴⁷ Renner, 511.

looked much like those of European bathhouses. The intention was to highlight the importance of the type of building. The exteriors of the public baths were part of the City Beautiful Movement era architecture that included mostly Beaux-Art designs. Bathhouse architecture also recalled neo-classical ornamentation. However, the interiors eliminated the luxuries of Turkish and Russian baths found in gentleman's baths. Instead floor space was optimized for more baths, showers, and laundry. This meant that plunging pools of varying temperatures would most likely not be found in middle-class baths as they were in the earlier private baths. Men's areas in public baths had mostly showers, while women's areas had a mix of tubs and showers for bathing children. Public baths also had gymnasiums and pools, as cities emphasized health and exercise for recreation.⁴⁸ The creation of semi-private space within a public space, reflecting contemporary understandings of middle-class standards of living, inadvertently created a place where homosexual activity could occur. Though these spaces did not cater to homosexuals, gay men could potentially find sexual partners at the public baths.

Early modern baths in the pre-WWII era, as mentioned previously, tended to be privately owned and were designed so that gay men could feel secure. Many of these baths were either mixed straight-gay places or strictly gay spaces. Early baths were usually known to homosexuals through verbal communications, as friends often invited friends who in turn told their friends. There were no guidebooks designating gay baths prior to the 1960s.⁴⁹ These bathhouses were often called saunas or spas and had much more relaxed environments than the public baths. Early-modern baths had masseuses, private staff, cafés, and parlor areas.⁵⁰ The presence of space for relaxing and forming a sense of community directly contrasted with the public bath setting. A modern early bath from the early twentieth century to the 1950s had an entrance with

48 Renner, 513-516, 517, and 526.

49 Chauncey, chapter 8. Also see Diane Christolm, *Queer Constellations* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 2005).

50 Chauncey, 212.

an office space where patrons would check in, pay, and receive a towel. The facilities included a locker room where patrons could change, and some also had more private rooms with cots. Often there was a small gymnasium with free weights; some also had steam rooms, saunas, baths, and private and large shower rooms.⁵¹ The number of private rooms depended on the clientele. There were also many large rooms for group encounters. The correlation between class and size often determined the design. For example, baths that catered to African-Americans and daily wage earners such as the Penn Post baths and the Mount Morris bath had large group shower rooms, but fewer amenities like saunas and steam rooms.⁵² Baths that were more upscale, like the Everard (nicknamed the ever hard) and Lafayette, had more amenities.⁵³

The design of modern bathhouses changed from that of early bathhouses as preferences among the clientele changed. While early bathhouses tended to be gentleman's saunas appropriated by gay men, modern bathhouse owners specifically designed spaces to be gay bathhouses. As a result, more sexually explicit features were incorporated into the design of the baths. These ranged from rooms created with non-loadbearing walls that could be rented out to patrons desiring more privacy to carving holes in walls in bathroom stalls to create opportunities for anonymous oral sex. Bathhouses in the 1970s often had wooden panels and vinyl on the walls. Gyms and locker rooms also had linoleum floors that were easy to clean. Baths intentionally included a mix of wet and dry space, meaning that there were a variety of steam rooms, saunas, and pools.⁵⁴ In addition, more private rooms and maze-like hallways were added, intentionally creating spaces for erotic flirtation. Fantasy rooms that created alternative sexual experiences, such as leather-themed rooms with sadomasochistic features, were also popular by the 1980s.

Cultural changes in the 1980s led to changes in the design of the bathhouses.

51 Chauncey, 213.

52 Chauncey, 218.

53 Chauncey, 216.

54 Tattelman, 81.



Figure 3.5. Bellevue Baths circa 2010 Locker Room Courtesy of Michael Burlando



Figure 3.6. Club Philadelphia Locker Room from ClubPhilly.com

In the 1980s body building and physique became more important to Americans in general, and appearance was especially important in gay culture even before that. Furthermore, the onset of HIV/AIDS meant that safer sex posters and condoms could be found on site. Finally, as different fetishes took hold, different types of rooms were offered such as leather rooms, rooms with swings, and theaters for viewing pornography. Today the amenities remain important to attracting clientele. Both currently operating bathhouses in Philadelphia have dozens of photos on their websites demonstrating the wide array of services that they offer.⁵⁵

Conclusion

Changes in the design of bathhouse interiors have reflected societal changes, as represented in layouts and types of bathhouses from the turn of the nineteenth century to today. While gay men used to rely on the appropriation of baths with a predetermined layout, modern bathhouses have been constructed to reflect the preferences of bathhouse patrons. Consumerism and sexual liberation gave more agency to owners of gay baths and gay men to design their own baths. New technologies, fetishes, and fashion continue to drive the design of bathhouses. Baths still include elements of Turkish and public baths, such as saunas, steam rooms, and showers, but also include new elements like theater rooms and gyms. Several of the types discussed above are represented in Philadelphia's urban fabric and will be discussed in the following chapters in the context of different preservation approaches.

⁵⁵ "Gallery," *Club Philadelphia*, last accessed January 29, 2015, http://www.clubphilly.com/club_philly/welcome.html and "Facilities," *Sansom Street Gym*, last accessed January 29, 2015, <http://www.sansomstreetgym.com/>.

Keeping the Memory Alive: Storyscapes of Bathhouses

Queer space is the collective creation of queer people. But that doesn't mean it disappears when we leave.

- Christopher Disman, 1996

Introduction

Queer space has long been studied by theorists, political activists, and historians, but has not been considered seriously by design professionals until recently.¹ The larger history of bathhouses includes the roles that baths played during decades of intense police regulation and social oppression. However, despite their importance, bathhouses are rarely celebrated as valuable community and liberating spaces for the expression of sexuality. Furthermore, bathhouses are often stigmatized within the gay community despite the fact that their interpretation can help tell important narratives about LGBT people. Finally, these spaces are hidden in the urban fabric and are quickly disappearing. This chapter considers the implications of preserving queer space and attempts to tell a fuller history of the gay bathhouse in Philadelphia. Queer places are notably in the shadows and have been categorized as spaces “that could not be seen, had no contour, and never endured beyond the sexual act.”² Yet histories about bathhouses are surfacing as attitudes about the queer community continue to change and the federal government, private donations, and non-profit groups move to financially back the preservation of queer spaces.

The first section of this chapter draws on recent work from preservation scholars such as Ned Kaufman, Delores Hayden, and Daniel Bluestone as well as the epistemology of the concept of “public space” to analyze place and diversity as they relate to Philadelphia bathhouses. I have chosen three main bodies of literature to ground this chapter: preservation theorists whose work focuses on collective memory and attachment to place; queer theorists and historians who study tangible and intangible

1 Reed, 64.

2 Betsky, 141.

queer space; and scholars who research public space and the public sphere. Theories considered in this section include discussions of queer space, storyscapes, and what those concepts mean in practice. The data from my survey, discussed below, help suggest approaches for managing bathhouses as preserved historic spaces preferable to “buildings.” The final part of this chapter makes concrete suggestions about the preservation of bathhouses, tying together the theories and the data. Together these sections lay the foundation for case studies of baths in Philadelphia in the final chapter.

Storyscape, Democracy, and Bathhouse Preservation

Before gay spaces such as bars, baths, theaters, and the like can be considered for preservation, it is important to discuss the nuances of commercial spaces driven by capitalism within the U.S. and specifically Philadelphia, as discussed in chapter two. While it is also key to keep in mind that bathhouse design and meaning changed in space and time, as detailed in chapter three, capitalism impacted overarching patterns of development in the American cultural landscape in the twentieth century. As free-market businesses, these places, particularly in the last quarter of the century, promised an exclusive experience usually based on sexual desires. Yet in general such places were subject to public scrutiny and laws, so they were semi-public, semi-private spaces.³ Despite architecture that attempted to create single-use space to promote modesty within bathhouses, gay men sought to defy society’s heterosexual conventions through homosexual experiences.⁴ Gay men wanted to create a safe space where their sexual identities could be affirmed. As inherently erotic spaces, bathhouses stood apart from heteronormative mainstream society and became a key part of the gay urban story.⁵

The architecture of bathhouses played a key role in creating a public/private setting that defined the narrative of the bathhouse experience. Public space theories

3 Weightman, 11.

4 Dave Holmes, Patrick O’Byrne, Denise Gastadlo, “Setting the Space for Sex: Architecture, Desire and Health Issues in Gay Bathhouses,” *Nursing Studies* (May 3 2005): 274.

5 Holmes et. al., 274-275.

originate from the German philosopher Jurgen Habermas, who defined the public sphere as permeable and as a potential indicator of democracy. Consumerism and increased diversity have challenged previous understandings of the public sphere in American culture.⁶ Habermas' theories have been summarized and developed by modernist and post-modernist thinkers, though his ideas have been critiqued for contributing to a white bourgeois public sphere. His theories mostly applied to a colonial and post-colonial world, before the emergence of modernity and now a post-modern era.

A post-modern understanding of the public sphere includes accepting that the public sphere evolved from a very narrow space prior to the Enlightenment transformation into a plurality with several definitions to accommodate complex democratic states today.⁷ Furthermore, existing bodies of theory involving the public sphere take into account the multiplicities of American identities. Various identities and groups have their own collective and individual identities that help inform the framework for discussing class, gender, race, sexuality, and status. The public sphere now includes phenomena like mass media and the Internet.⁸ The voices and conversation about abstract concepts that occur in the public sphere are critical to this discussion because they impact the physical reality of public space.

Public space at first was a space for white, wealthy, male landowners to discuss ideas, and therefore was homogenous. Prior to the Enlightenment, in the 17th century, the monarch made the decisions in a unilateral way that did not allow for the formation of a public sphere. But Enlightenment thinkers produced ideas of equality, ordinary citizenship, and self-determination. The public sphere has since developed to include voices from working-class citizens, people of color, queers, women, and other historically marginalized groups. Thus it can be useful in understanding how

⁶ Alan McKee, 2-5.

⁷ McKee, 8-9.

⁸ Houston Baker Jr., "Critical Memory and the Black Public Sphere," in *The Public Black Sphere*, ed. Black Public Sphere Collective (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1995).

a liberal democratic society functions.⁹ The public sphere can be used as an index of democratic change in America in general and the justice/injustices directed at the queer community specifically. Democratic change can be measured by the number of opinions voiced by different groups within a public sphere, where multiple voices are indicative of the success of democracy. If the make-up of society includes many genders, many races, many sexualities, many religions, many ethnicities, and many beliefs and only a few are being heard in the public sphere, then public space is not really public. The health of democracy is at risk if not all groups have a dialogical opportunity within the public sphere.

Because queer space was historically built on the assumption that it had to be invisible, Aaron Betsky argues that the construction of queer space within the public sphere can be understood as an analogy to the “closet.” He writes:

First, queer space finds its origin in the closet, the place of hiding and constructing one’s own identity. It creates itself in darkness, in the obscure, in the hidden. It is a secret condensation of the orders of the home rather than allowing you to live in the fiction of established structure, which of course depends on a consent to live together, on economic development, and on institutionalized social practices . . . it proposed a world of fantasy that is directly related to the body and has no definite space.¹⁰

It was within the less regulated areas of public space that gay men first developed their communities.¹¹

Within the architecture of these places, there is a further delimitation of public/private space that determines who frequents the area and the types of sexual encounters that occur.¹² Baths were “safe havens from homophobia,” and were also liberating places.¹³ Baths, bars, theaters, bookstores, and other gay places became

9 McKee, 9.

10 Betsky, 21.

11 Chauncey, 180.

12 Tattelman, 72.

13 Disman, 74.

semi-public and semi-private, regulated by public consensus, and yet invisible.¹⁴ They were sufficiently publicly visible to allow for strangers to meet in a semi-public/private collective homosocial environment, but baths were not recognized or voiced in a larger public sphere until after the gay liberation movement gained momentum. Even then the voices of the baths fell silent after the HIV/AIDS epidemic. The absence of queer voices in the public sphere can be seen as a failure of American democracy.

Preservationists and public historians like Ned Kaufman and Delores Hayden argue that the absence of these voices in American history, preservation, and public history also represents a failure for historic preservation. If each voice has value and is attached to place, there should be a plurality of spaces preserved that are associated with each voice. Kaufman argues that we (as a society) cannot afford to ignore the “other” less visible sites and allow the capitalist free market to define the values placed on space. He says that defining a space by its market value endangers the stories and voices of underrepresented members of society.¹⁵ A queer space should not be ignored because it did or does not have as much perceived social value as Mount Vernon or Monticello.

It is not just the preservation of these spaces that enables democracy; the social value and narratives attached to the place are also beneficial to society.¹⁶ Because place and narrative are inseparable, Kaufman calls the broad idea of connecting stories, shared memory, and values to place “storyscapes.”¹⁷ These storyscapes are what bring people to sites. He argues that the collective gathering at these sites provides a solution to the failures of democracy in preservation. Through engagement in narrative, groups and people can work together to understand the history of place, and work to redress the unequal balance of power, giving voice to those who have been

14 Disman, 74.

15 Ned Kaufman, *Race, Place, and History: Essays on the Past and Future of Historic Preservation* (New York: Routledge, 2009), 27.

16 Kaufman, 4.

17 Kaufman, 38.

silenced.¹⁸

The long-time focus on preserving buildings because of their perceived aesthetic value excluded large groups of Americans from the preservation field.¹⁹ There was an overemphasis on landmarking places because of the architect, the design, the construction, and other material features. Less tangible qualities have largely been left out of the discussion. This meant that working-class Americans, immigrants, African-Americans, and other communities lost preservation opportunities. Furthermore, the storyscapes previously endorsed by preservationists focused on narratives of patriotism, unity, and national pride, despite the fact that many factions make up American culture.²⁰ Stories of marginalized communities were excluded from public space as well as from the history of preservation. Urban policies and systemic oppression leave the fabric of marginalized people vulnerable to rampant urban renewal, resettlement projects, and unnecessary divisions of community.²¹

Expanding the earlier definition of preservation by using stories related to place, recognizing social value, and understanding collective memory can enable preservation to strengthen American identity and simultaneously deepen democracy. First, people are inextricably tied to the places where they live, go to church, socialize, play, and learn.²² These are the places that make up people's individual identity, family identity, and larger neighborhood and collective identity, therefore holding a cultural and social value. Kaufman captures this succinctly when he writes:

The concept of social value posits that feelings of attachment to places are fundamental to our identity as individuals and as community members. They anchor us to the world. Take the places and our sense of our security is weakened . . . they can provide links between the past and

18 Kaufman, 32. This argument will be expanded in the next several pages, and a larger discussion will accompany the rest of this chapter pertaining to how preservation of baths in particular can help democratize preservation.

19 Dolores Hayden, *The Power of Place: Urban Landscapes as Public History* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1995), 8.

20 Kaufman, 53.

21 Hayden, 9.

22 Hayden, 16,

present, help give disempowered groups back their history, anchor a community's identity, play a role in a community's daily life, or provide habitual community meeting places for ritual or informal gatherings.²³

The preservation of invisible spaces can give a sense of place, acting as a visual cue and educational tool. Inclusive preservation and public history aim to negotiate less palpable histories of the United States, giving voice to the silenced.²⁴

Through the preservation of these sites, historic preservation can work to strengthen identity and deepen democracy. First, preservation strengthens identity and empowers people by giving a voice to various marginalized groups. Tying the past and the present together in a physical space gives the marginalized community a reference point in the public sphere.²⁵ Having a publically recognized story in a public place causes a community to work to extract meaning, which spurs debate about the interpretation of the history represented in that place. These conversations are vital for the richness of communities as they can create common roots, give room for discussion, and provide a foundation for evolving ideas.²⁶ Second, preservation can deepen democracy by pulling on the principles of equality and inclusion to undertake a preservation project. In other words, the process of preservation happens through a democratic process that reinforces the value of a democracy. A community must come together in order to discuss how a site should best be preserved. Once a site is preserved, the place and story will exist in a public sphere, improving the index of democracy. Third, applying queer theory, space, and history to preservation is also important because this framework provides a methodologically different way to approach history. Queer theory attempts to dismantle the oppression and patriarchy that have led to the systematic exclusion of minorities in the field. As the field of historic preservation comes into a post-modern age, queer theory is an important tool



23 Kaufman, 248.

24 Hayden, 96.

25 Kaufman, 38.

26 Kaufman, 290.

with a set of procedures that rely on fundamentally different grounds than former understandings of how to conduct and organize historic research and writing.²⁷

The Stonewall Inn was the first LGBT cultural point that was nominated and recognized nationally. Stonewall was the site of a police raid and later rioting of queers and residents of Greenwich Village in response to police harassment. Many consider these events to be a turning point in the gay liberation movement of the late 1960s and early 1970s. Today the Stonewall riots are celebrated and commemorated during the month of June with nationwide parades celebrating queer identity. Now that the location is identified by the National Park Service, it is publically recognized as a site of oppression and resistance. It is landmarked with pride flags and plaques, and is hard to miss by passersby. Stonewall Inn's preservation has gone beyond the physical in New York to virtual forms with several articles, blogs, and even Facebook posts discussing its relevance. A post on Facebook early in February 15, from a gay man and his friend who had never been to New York City, read, "Because why not???"   — with Ben Fraser at Stonewall Inn."²⁸ Pictures and tweets from the location have brought Stonewall into the media's public space as well.

Recently many local, state, and national bodies have been moving towards recognizing the LGBT community's collective identity and past. The queer community is working in partnership with these organizations to reaffirm the identity of the queer community in public space, further contributing to democratic ideals of plurality. Because there is a renewed emphasis on identifying and preserving places related to LGBTQ groups, it is important to consider how different places and spaces related to the queer community should be preserved.

²⁷ Joan W. Scott, *Gender and the Politics of History* (New York, Columbia University Press, 1999) and Judith Butler and Elizabeth Weed, *The Question of Gender: Joan W. Scott's Critical Feminism* (Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 2011).

²⁸ Alex Schroer Facebook page, last accessed February 24, <https://www.facebook.com/alexschroer821?fref=ts>.

Survey Methodology:

In order to better understand how to preserve early modern and modern bathhouses in the United States, I designed a questionnaire and database that would help me answer the question: At what level is the history of bathhouses most significant in terms of the urban fabric narrative? I divided the meaning of the urban fabric narrative into three levels: neighborhood, urban object, and interior. The neighborhood level means preservation of a bathhouse in terms of the larger fabric of the area in which the building exists. This means taking into consideration why the bathhouses exist where they do. It also means considering designation of the larger neighborhood or district in which a bathhouse is located because of the neighborhood's importance to the gay community. The urban object level means looking at the location and design of the building, especially the exterior. The interior level means considering what material on the interior of the building allowed the bath to function as it did, including the floor plan, finishes, and less tangible components.²⁹

There were eight questions overall that asked for a ranking from 1-5 and three questions that asked for a response in words. The Likert scale questions were associated with words corresponding to the value placed by the participant: unimportant (1), somewhat unimportant (2), neutral (3), important (4), or very important (5) (see Appendix A). I recruited participants through academic and professional networks as well as via websites such as Craigslist.³⁰

The notes and long answer questions gave qualitative data needed to accurately interpret the quantitative portion of the survey. Below is a summary and interpre-

²⁹ The survey was designed in Access, where the database was also housed. Most questions asked for a ranking from 1-5, with 1 being the least important and 5 the most important. Because participants in this survey had a wide variety of experiences, many questions included a space for notes, which could be used for clarification or additional insights.

³⁰ I found that the most successful venues for responses were professional and academic networks, while I received very few responses from advertisements on Craigslist. All participants' identities are confidential. In order to qualify, participants had to be male identified and have knowledge and/or experience of gay bathhouses. Participants were not asked any specific questions regarding visits to bathhouses or their sexuality.

tation of the data.³¹ While the survey is valuable for this thesis, it also has limitations. The method and survey cannot provide information on bathhouse life much earlier than the 1970s because many men in that generation are deceased and aging. The survey is much better suited for interpreting bathhouse culture in the last 30 to 40 years and is more applicable to modern bathhouses. The survey and its methods are not a substitute for archival research that provide much needed primary information. The survey does not include plans or descriptions, insurance surveys, photographs, websites, or personal visitations as well as other key visuals that are necessary to understand the function and form of bathhouses.

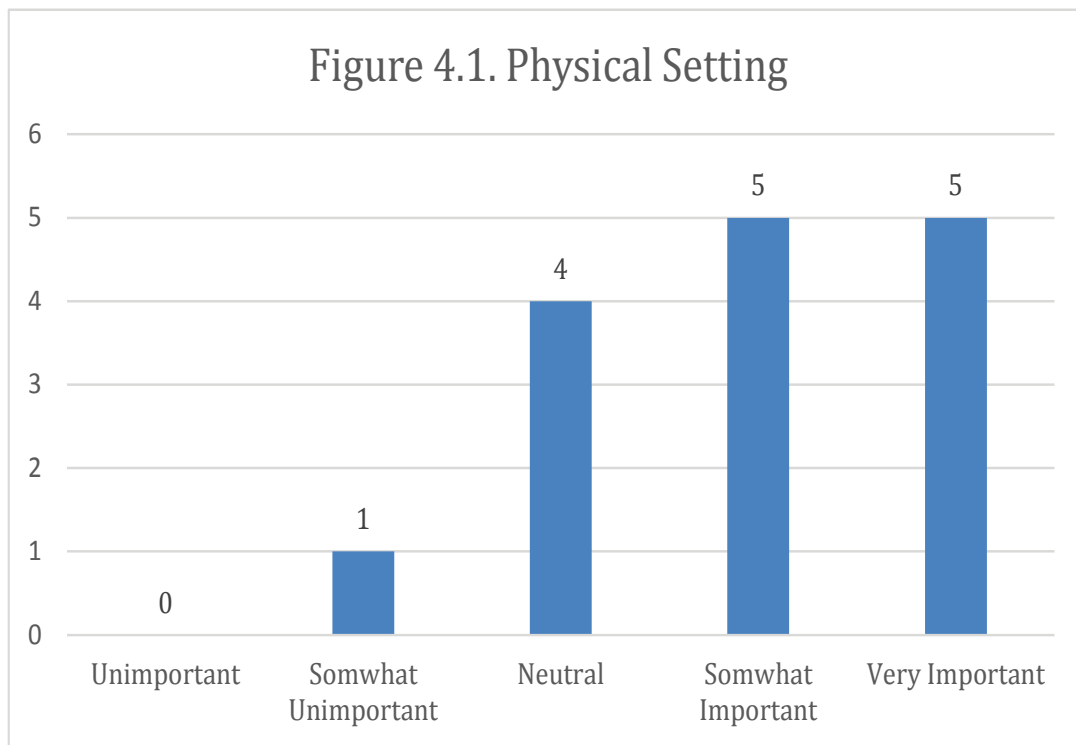
Survey Results:

The questions work in clusters moving from large-scale to small-scale information. In other words, questions surveyed information starting at the neighborhood level and moving to the interior level. Questions 1, 3, 4, and 5 stand alone, but complement the information in question 2. Question 1 addresses the physical setting of the bath and to what degree participants believe the interior and exterior impacted the bathhouse experience. Out of the fifteen participants, ten said that the physical setting played either an important or very important role. Participants took physical setting to have several meanings [Figure 4.1]. Many of the respondents indicated that having the physical setting be “hidden slightly,” especially on the exterior, was “essential” to the experience. Participant #11 wrote: “The physical setting sets the scene for the activity to occur.” Although others are more ambivalent about the physical setting, participant #9 said, “While historic bath houses are very much gone, the physical set-

³¹Once participants agreed to take the survey, I delivered it electronically by email or by hard copy in person. Participants then filled out the survey and returned it to me by email or in person. Many participants included additional materials about baths and related topics in the form of links to websites or articles, or made suggestions on how to improve the questionnaire. Once the results were received I saved and organized them. The results were then recorded in Access and backed up in Excel. Once I reached my goal of 15 participants, I queried the results. The data were exported to Excel so that they could be analyzed through the creation of diagrams and graphs that accurately reflect the responses to the survey. In addition, I read through the notes and long answers that accompanied the Likert-scale portion of the survey.

ting in terms of the actual bathhouse and its interiors may not say [as] much about a bathhouse and its interpretation as the neighborhood or the immediate street in or on which it is located or are located.” Thus while some believed the bathhouse experience and exterior environment were linked, several others did not find a correlation between them at all.

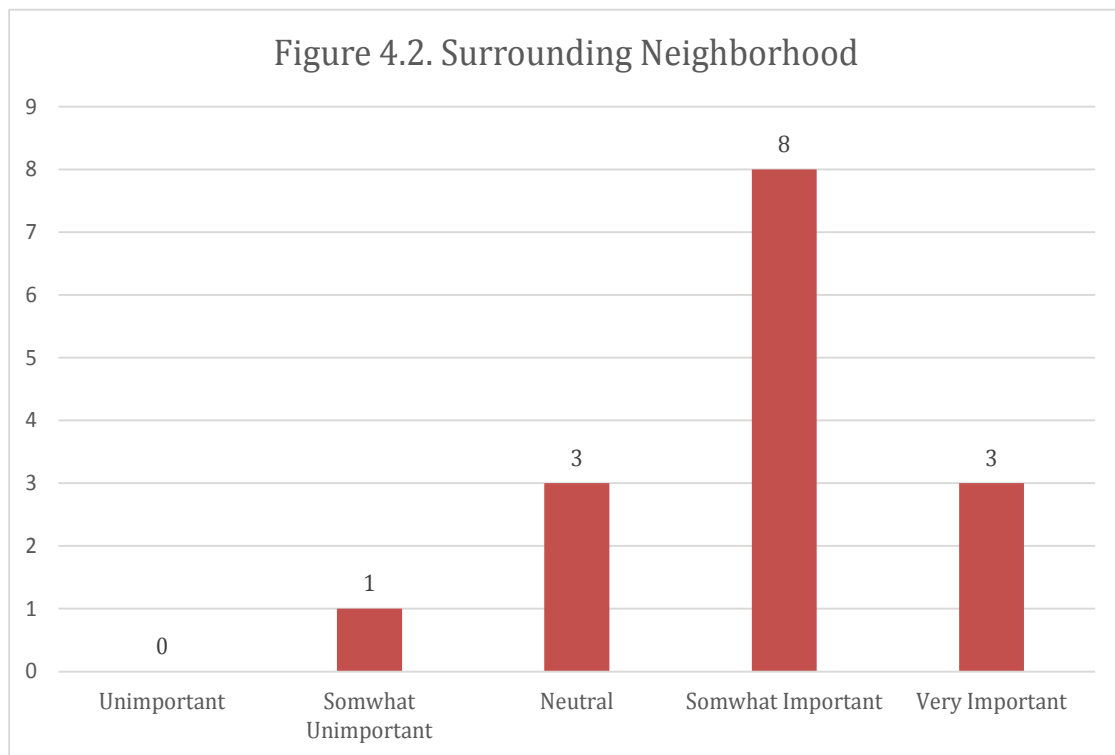
Questions 2a through 2g asked participants to rank a specific characteristic at all three levels of significance (neighborhood, urban object, interior) on a scale of 1-5 in terms of its relationship to and impact on the bathhouse. Questions 2a through 2c addressed the neighborhood level and question 2d addressed the exterior, while the remaining questions (2e through 2g) focused on the interior. Question 2a examined the status of the surrounding neighborhoods. A large majority of participants (eight)



valued the surrounding neighborhood as a 4 (somewhat important) while three more said it was a 5 (very important). Almost 25% of participants viewed the immediate community as either a 3 (neutral) or a 2 (somewhat unimportant) [Figure 4.2]. Most participants explained that the character of the neighborhood was working-class or

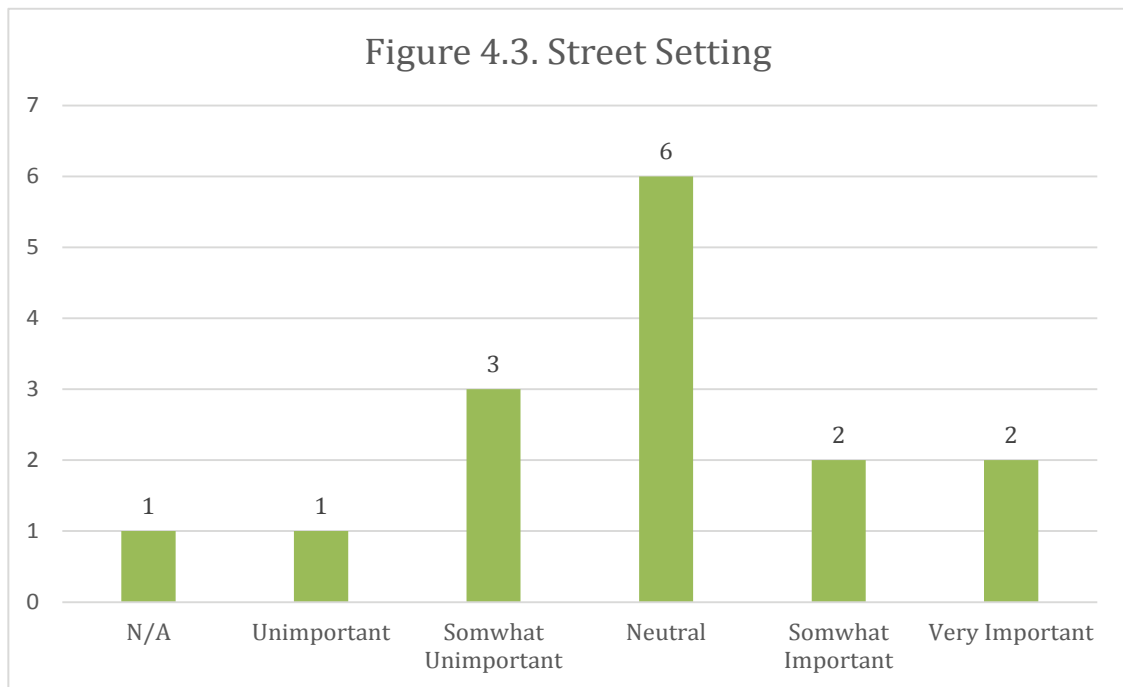
industrial and that baths were in marginal or dangerous neighborhoods, along with other LGBT venues. Many stated that the baths could be found in the Gayborhood, which is heavily concentrated between Chestnut Street to the north and Pine Street to the south, and Juniper Street to the west and 12th Street to the east. Participant #4 wrote, “The actual location of these buildings usually says a lot about the history of LGBT acceptance within that place. Often bathhouses were founded in areas that were heavily populated with LGBT individuals on the sidelines of society.” He and others confirmed that bathhouses were peripheral to the mainstream. While some wrote that the neighborhood had to make them feel safe or they would not go, others said that different baths could take on the character of the neighborhood, giving them a local flavor.

Question 2b addressed street settings in relation to bathhouses. While one participant abstained from answering, six participants said that the street setting was neutral in importance while four ranked it as 1 or 2 and the remaining four ranked it as 4 or 5. The numeric result for the street setting was less telling than the qualitative



data, which uniformly explain that while specific streets may not have been important to a bathhouse, streets in general created an aura of safety or anonymity that was important to most frequenters [Figure 4.3]. The exception to this was participant #11, who confidently wrote, “I have gone to bathhouses since the late 1970s. It never mattered what street it was on. I was never in fear of being seen entering a bathhouse.”

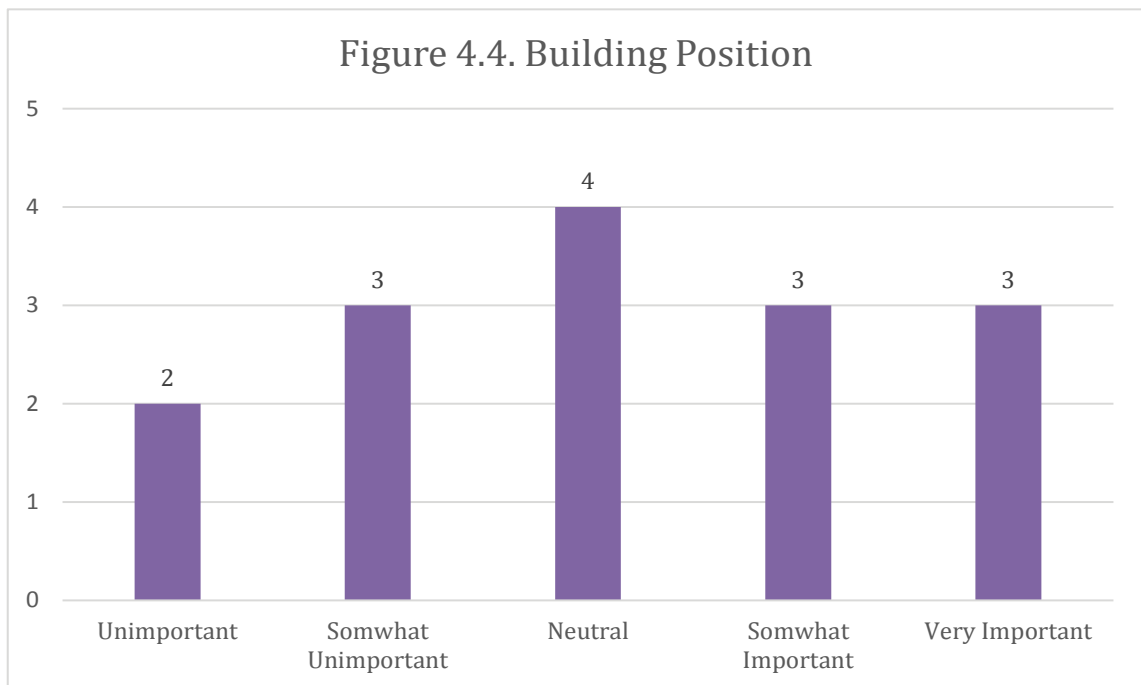
Question 2c analyzed the exterior by asking about the building’s position [Figure 4.4]. While the phrasing of the question left it open to several interpretations, as reflected in the qualitative responses, the quantitative data denote that there is no definitive answer as to whether participants believed that the position of the building necessarily mattered. Some participants extrapolated the meaning of the question beyond the strict relationship of the architectural qualities and historic application. For example, participant #5 wrote, “You cared about what was going on inside. No



one wanted to look at the windows. There were plenty of opportunities inside the bathhouse for guys who wanted to be watched. ;-)” Again, the position of the building to the streets related to the ability of the bath to provide discretion and anonymity. Many participants said that entrances tended to be “non-descript,” while others said

that they preferred alley entrances.

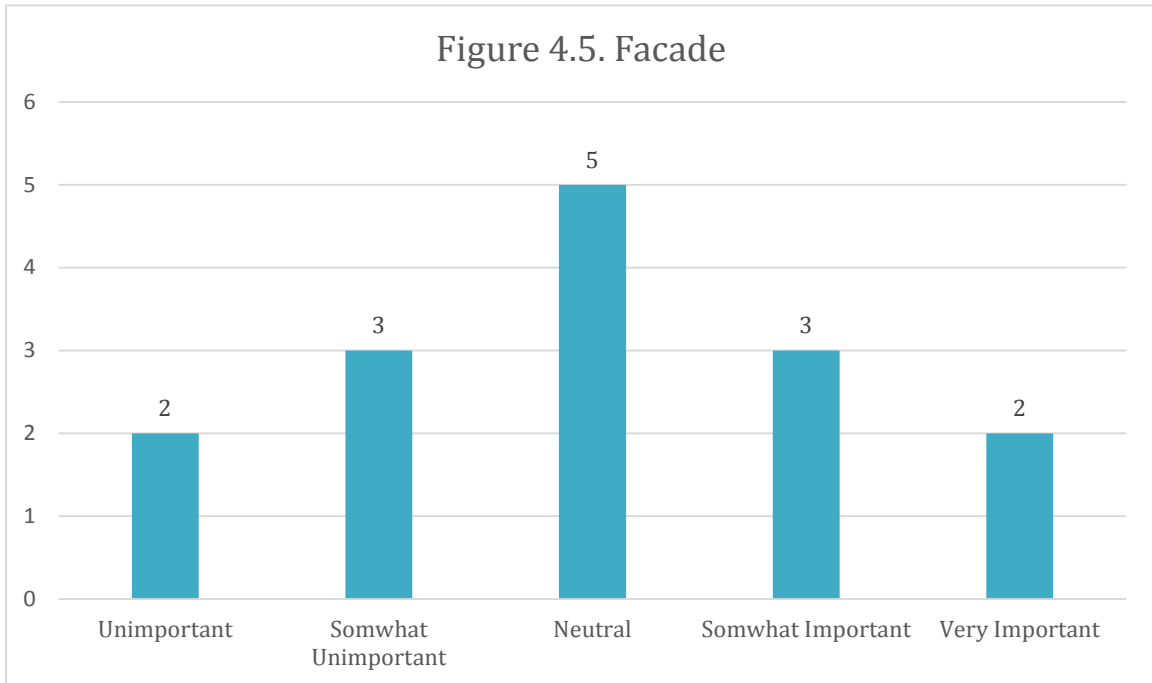
Similarly, as the scale of the questions moved from the neighborhood level to the individual urban object, focusing on the facades of the buildings (2d), the results created more symmetrical bell curve results. Five participants indicated that the facade was a neutral (3) quality while three believed it was either somewhat unimportant (2) or somewhat important (4), and two thought it was unimportant (1) or very important (5) [Figure 4.5]. Most of the qualitative data show that that the facade could usually be described as minimalist and simple. The men were clearly more in-



terested in the interior, both in terms of design and activities. One explanation for this given by participant #7 is that owners of the bathhouses tried not to give too much away on the exterior, and instead invested in the interior design.

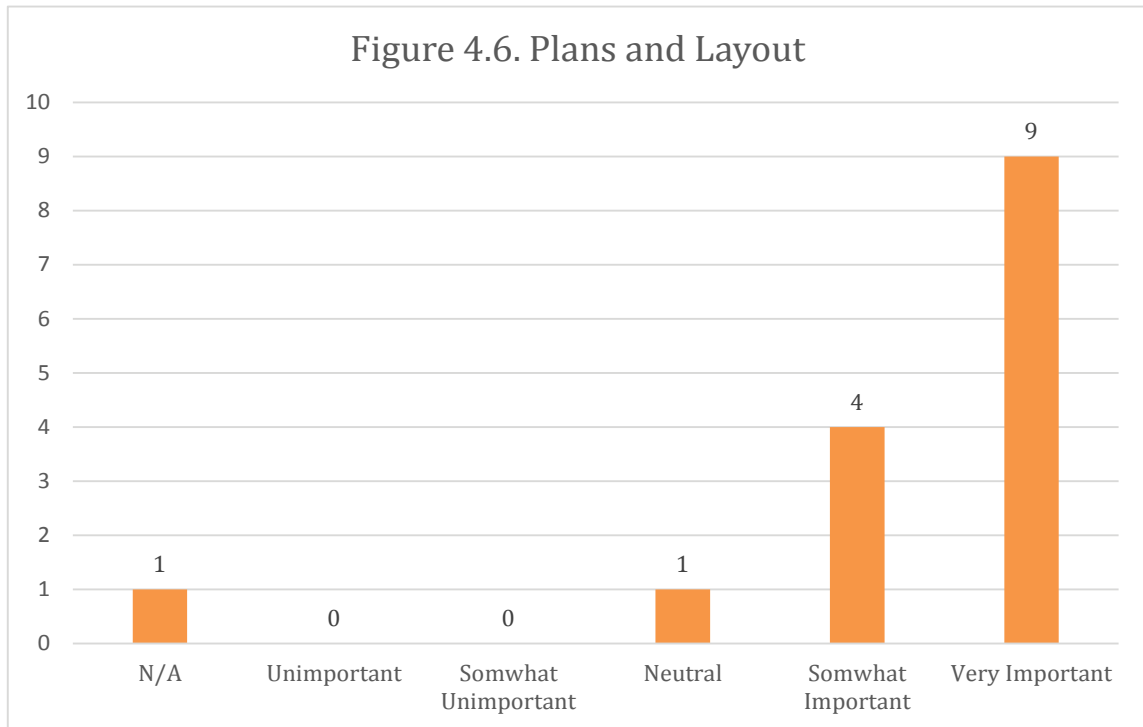
While the data suggest that the exterior of the building may not be the most important quality of the bathhouse, participants had more uniform quantitative data when it came to the interior of the building (2e). One out of 15 participants abstained from answering the question about the plans and layout of bathhouses. Of the re-

remaining fourteen, only one rated the plans and layouts as neutral and the rest as important or very important [Figure 4.6]. The qualitative data show that many agreed that floorplans were “really, really important” or “the essence of the bathhouse.” For



many the anticipation created by the layout was essential. According to many of the participants, the plans controlled the experience of the baths: “[The] physical layout does much to alter the feel and atmosphere of a bath house. [The plans] drive the kind of activity that occurs and the nature of the interactions of those wandering the halls, ranging from furtive to overly social.” Even more importantly, the layout of the bathhouse can create pockets of public-private settings.

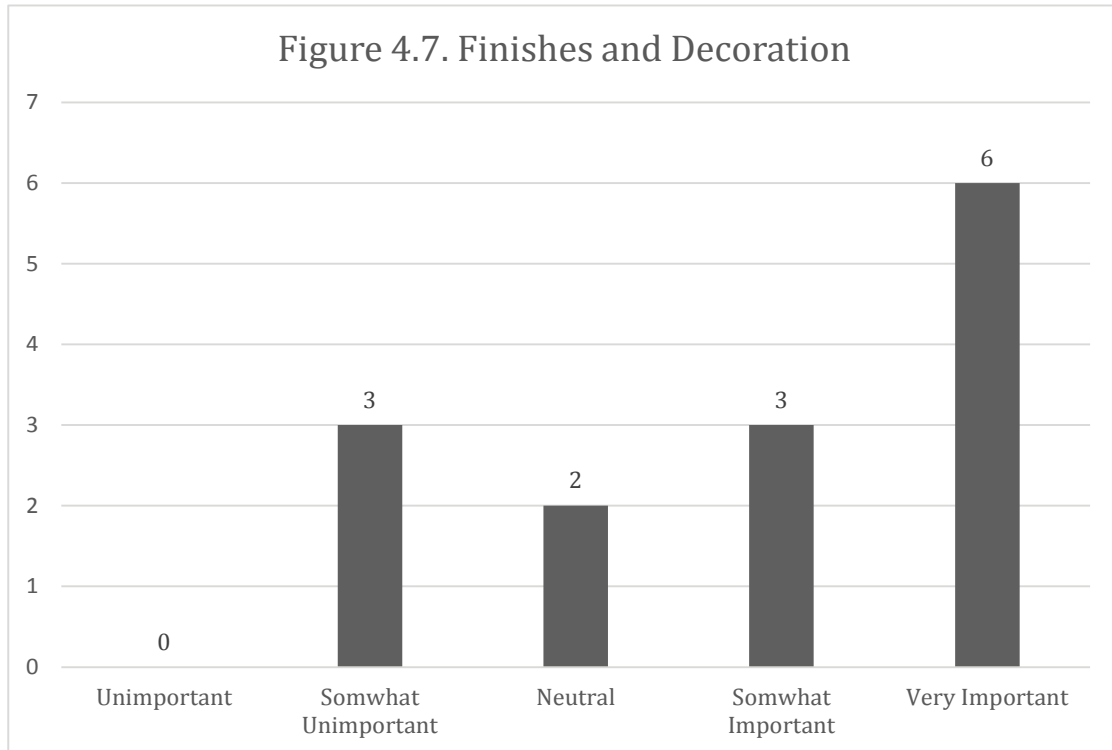
Other interior elements were less definitive; answers to a question about finishes and decoration (2f) ranged from somewhat unimportant to very important. While one person abstained, almost half of those who did answer ranked finishes and decorations as very important, while three, two, and three participants valued finishes as somewhat unimportant, neutral, or somewhat important respectively [Figure 4.7]. However, most participants in their qualitative answers said that various finishes and decorations were important, including steam works, lighting, theaters,



and water features. Three of the respondents who wrote notes said that lighting was extremely important. The right balance of lighting was critical for many men, as the bathhouse had to be dim to maintain a sense of anonymity but also light enough to see faces in order to make informed decisions about sexual partners. Furthermore, many men discussed the need for the facilities to be clean and sexy. Participant #11 wrote: “And the decoration is best when it can imply or show sexuality.” Most of the interior elements contributed to the sexual experience, and therefore were important to the character of the bathhouse. However, the bathhouse had to play two roles by being recognizable to possible costumers and indistinguishable to regular urbanites.

The results imply that intangible qualities (2g) were valued more than concrete qualities such as the building facade. Participants appreciated the feeling of safety or the ability to approach other men much more than the exterior qualities of the building. However, the degree of that value ranged from 2 to 5, with most viewing intangible qualities as important. Seven participants thought that intangible qualities were either somewhat important (4) or neutral (3) [Figure 4.8]. Participant #2 wrote,

“Gay men will go into the worst areas without blinking an eye for sex[.]” Four participants who wrote notes mentioned that safety was important. Four others mentioned

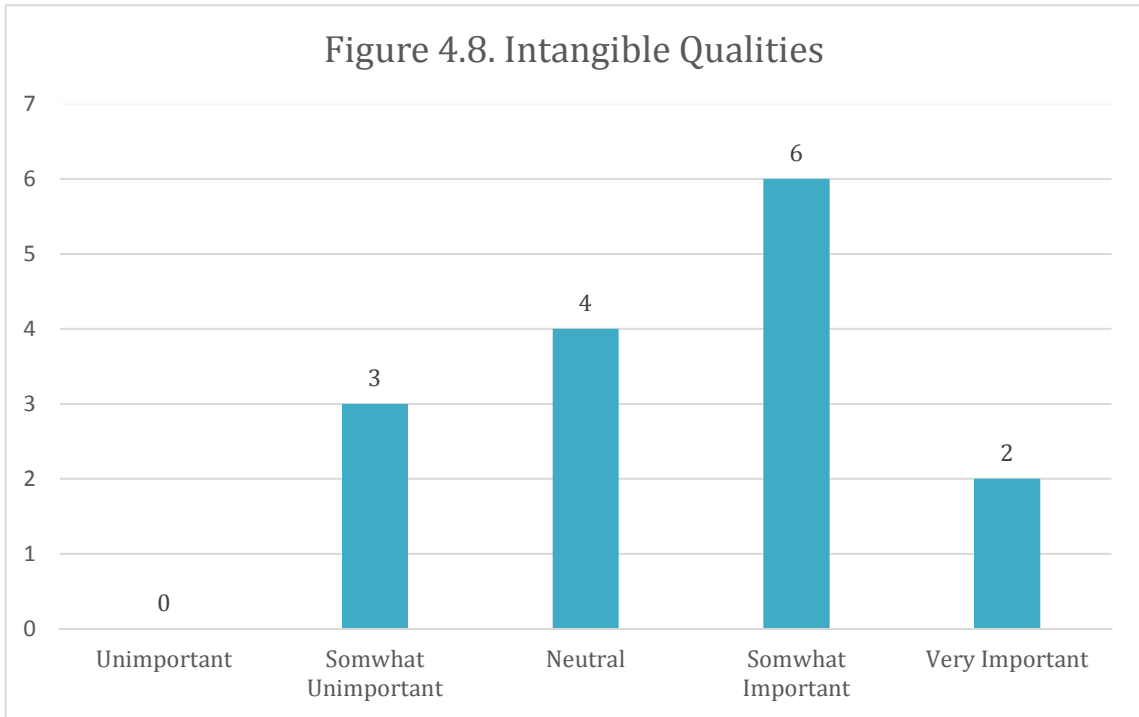


the need for the atmosphere to be sexy. Because it was not a decoration or finish, many men included music as an intangible quality. Music contributed to the environment and sexual atmosphere.

While the data demonstrate that most participants thought that the physical setting was important to the bathhouse, the ways in which participants valued different components varied. Most participants agreed that the surrounding neighborhood and plans/layouts were the most important to the bathhouse, but opinions of other qualities like street or building location were more difficult to interpret. However, it is evident that the participants were more divided in their opinions about the impact of exterior qualities, whereas the interior qualities of the bathhouse were indisputably important to the experience of the bathhouse.

Three questions complemented the quantitative data by asking participants

to use specific adjectives to describe the interior, exterior, and location of the baths. The purpose of this section of the survey was to target the three specific levels that I am using as a framework for analyzing and understanding the preservation of bathhouses. Mostly negative adjectives were used to describe the interior, including words such as skeezy, cheesy, dingy, dirty, seedy, raunchy, and sleezy. Despite this agreement among all the participants that bathhouses embodied negative adjectives, the baths were essential to the gay community. Furthermore, one could find others sexy



and be sexy in this environment even if it was “skeezy.” But if the association with the interior is negative, how does that impact the preservation approach when thinking about plans, finishes, and other elements of the interior?

The exterior was described with neutral words like non-descript, subtle, blank, and unobtrusive. Each of these words clearly communicated that the exterior was not meant to draw attention. Although the exterior was not viewed as architecturally significant, the discreet nature of the facade should be kept in mind when thinking about preserving a building that was formerly a bathhouse. Finally, the comments on the

neighborhood were much more varied. Many agreed that the bathhouses tended to be in seedier parts of town that were marginalized, but were at the same time central and accessible. This gives the impression that the baths were socially but not physically marginalized. Bathhouses were easy to get to and in plain sight, but were not condoned by the public or by large parts of the LGBT community. Today the baths can be found in thriving areas because the social currency of the gay community is on the rise. The necessity of making sensitive decisions regarding the exterior is important to consider in areas that have improving economic situations.

Conclusion

History is inescapable and complex; varied histories are inherent in if not central to thriving communities, urban areas, and strong democracies. Because the built environment and history are so intertwined, both buildings and histories play a key role in strengthening each of these communities. In order to have an impact, stories behind the places must be brought to the surface and used to create a more inclusive and therefore more democratic society.

Ghosts of the Past: Case Studies of Philadelphia Gay Baths and How to Approach Their Preservation

Bathhouses vary greatly from one to another in terms of their exterior appearance... Their advertisements say nothing of what goes on inside the place, so you would have to know what a bathhouse is or know what they mean when they say “a sauna” or “a spa for men.”

- Joseph Couture, 2006

Introduction:

Outlining the places where gay communities have existed in Philadelphia and the reasons that queers gathered in those places helps to map and understand the urban boundaries of bathhouses. The history of the gay ghetto is tied to the history of bathhouses in the United States and in Philadelphia. Allan Berubé highlights at least four different types of bathhouses existing from the nineteenth century to present day. Analyzing how bathhouses are important to the storyscape of the LGBT community through a survey shows different layers of importance of the baths. This chapter will apply the aforementioned theories and survey results to critically engage case studies of several baths in Philadelphia.

The first part of this chapter will demonstrate the relationship of bathhouses in Philadelphia to the geographies of the Gayborhood. The second part will provide a framework to consider when applying preservation to bathhouses. The third section will consist of case studies of four bathhouses, representing different general types of baths. Each case study will include a brief history of the bathhouse, an analysis of its design in relation to preservation, and the limitations of preservation. The majority of Philadelphia’s gay baths can be classified as early modern or modern gay baths. Accordingly, Philadelphia baths came about in the early twentieth century or were popular in the middle to late twentieth century. As demonstrated previously, bathhouses tend to exist within areas that are officially or unofficially demarcated as gay neighborhoods. Sometimes baths were in transitional spaces between gay neigh-

borhoods and commercial or business districts. Often the baths were marginalized even by other minority groups that felt their own forms of oppression, such as African-Americans. In Philadelphia the most visible baths, known to host gay men or men seeking sex with men, fell within the Washington West neighborhood.

Philadelphia baths, including those featured in case studies in this chapter, represent a period of bath history concentrated in the middle of the twentieth century. The Camac Baths started as a Jewish shvitz, created for religious purposes for immigrant Jews in the neighborhood. Later it merged with the 12th Street Gym, a fitness studio in Center City. Camac Baths is located near the Gayborhood on a narrow back street, away from prying eyes, and falls into the “favorite spot” bathhouse category described in chapter three. The second bath, on the fourth floor of the Hale Building on Chestnut Street, is near the periphery of the Gayborhood. The public physical evidence of the bath today is a sign on the back of the building near Sansom Street and Juniper that reads: “Drucker’s Bellevue Health Baths Saunas 4th Floor.” Drucker’s Bath served all men, not just those who wanted sex with men, though it did come to have associations with the gay community. It attracted mostly older gay men and was an early modern bath. Finally, two currently operating baths in Philadelphia, Sansom Street Gym and Club Philly, were home to a variety of different baths and bath chains before they were modernized. These baths demonstrate key aspects of modernization that occurred in the bathhouse scene between the 1970s and today: the popularity of baths in the 1970s, their decline in the 1980s, and changing design in the intervening forty years. Club Philly and Sansom Street Gym are examples of modern day baths.

Where are the Baths?

The overarching narrative of bathhouse development, described in chapter three is one of expansion over the course of the twentieth century.¹ Throughout the 1900s homosexual communities gained visibility, numbers, and power, which in

¹ See D’Emilio, *Sexual Politics, Sexual Communities*.

turn meant that institutions related to the gay community also grew more prominent. Heightened visibility meant more attention in community resources such as gay guides like “Damron’s Address Book.” As baths gained visibility in such resources by the end of the twentieth century, they simultaneously increased in numbers. The growth in the strength and organization of the post-war homosexual community directly correlated to the expansion of commercial spaces. As documented in chapter two, other forces such as capitalism and urban geographies also helped spur the growth of the bathhouse industry amongst gay men. Thus the storyscape of gay bathhouses follows the general trajectory of the history of homosexual communities in the post-war era in the United States, but was also influenced by urban trends like planning, suburbanization, commodification, and city planning. World War II led to a change in the landscape of bathhouses in Philadelphia; only one gay bath had existed before the war. Cultural changes such as HIV/AIDS and urban renewal led to the constriction of the Gayborhood and fewer baths in the 1980s. Finally, growing acceptance of the LGBT community in the twenty-first century was accompanied by a

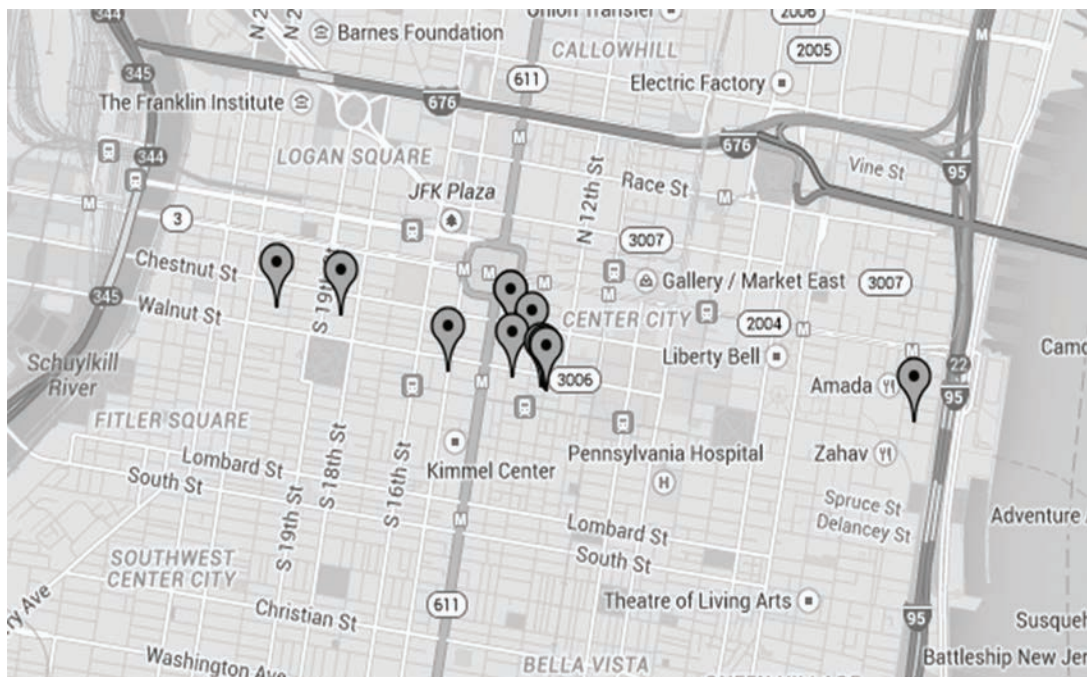


Figure 5.1. Google Generated Map of Bathhouse Locations in Post-War Period

growth in the number of bathhouses.

About twenty-five baths have been identified as existing in Philadelphia between the 1920s and present day. They ranged from Turkish baths built for genteel Philadelphians and visitors at the turn of the nineteenth century to gay baths that appropriated row houses and redesigned the interiors by the late 1970s. Nine of the twenty-five baths were Turkish or Russian baths that pre-dated the public baths, meaning that they were designed before the City Beautiful Movement of the 1890s and 1900s. Of the nine late nineteenth century baths, two were known to be frequented by men seeking men. Between 1890 and 1950, six other baths were constructed by the Philadelphia Bath Association, a benevolent organization responsible for designing and building public baths in Philadelphia. Other baths discussed in this study were identified in previous studies such as Jacob Galecki's Master's Thesis, through stories collected in interviews, or by surveying gay guides. I have estimated that between the early 1900s and present day nearly a dozen gay bathhouses existed in Philadelphia.

The majority of the gay baths (in Philadelphia) considered in this study existed in the 1960s and 1970s, with 53% in operation between 1960 and 1979. Nearly one third of all the currently known gay baths in Philadelphia existed between 1970 and 1979. Philadelphia, unlike many other cities such as New York and San Francisco, had several baths open in the 1980s when it was unusual to have any baths operating at all.² Some baths, like the Back Street Baths and the Chancellor Athletic Club, were founded in the 1980s. Figure 5.1 below demonstrates that in the 1990s there were very few baths in operation, presumably because rising fear of HIV/AIDS reduced the demand for such establishments. This chart displays the baths uncovered during the research process. There may be more, and the dates are not exact. Due to the fact that baths moved and changed names, and that the longer identity of the baths was always in flux, this is an approximate summary. In the early 2000s there were a few short-

² See Christopher Disman's *"The San Francisco Bathhouse Battles of 1984"* and Scott Bronstein's *"4 New York Bathhouses Still Operate Under City's Program of Inspections."*

lived baths. Finally, at present the number of baths is on the rise, with three gyms and baths currently operating.

Name of Bath	Approximate Years
Back Street Baths	1984-1986
Barracks	1971-1977
Bellevue Baths	1965-1986
Bellevue Turkish Court Baths	1962-1964
Camac Baths	1920-1970
Chancellor Athletic Club	1988-1989
Club Body Center	1991-1999
Club Philadelphia Baths	1975-1999
Club Philly	Present
Drucker's Bellevue Baths	1970
LR Fitness	2000-Unknown
Philly Jacks	2000-2001
Sansom Street Gym	Present
12 Street Gym	1994-Present

Figure 5.2. Table of Philadelphia Gay Baths and Years of Operation

It is important to note that at most there were four baths listed at any one time in the gay guides.³ Growth in the number of gay baths in Philadelphia's urban landscape is linked with the trend of the appearance of baths and other gay establishments in gay guides. While the developments may be culturally separate phenomena, there is a connection between the two. Furthermore, the growth in the number of baths and gay commercial spaces was influenced by commodification and gay liberation occurring in an urban environment. As more gay men moved to the city, they needed a way to locate the baths. At the same time the growth in number and visibility of gay men

³ Bob Damron's *Address Book* (San Francisco: Bob Damron Enterprises, 1976), 189.

meant there was a market for the baths and a gay guidebook as well.⁴

In 1965 there was only one gay bath listed in the traveling gay guide, the Bellevue Turkish Court Baths, which had an older male clientele.⁵ Yet the baths attracted a wide range of men, from students to established businessmen. Many baths in Philadelphia catered to a younger crowd. Another feature of baths in Philadelphia was that the turnover rate was high. Many baths existed for a few years and then would close and reopen under a new name. For example, Back Street Baths operated from 1220 Chancellor Street in the early 1980s. Chancellor Athletic Club, which started at Chancellor and Camac, moved to 1220 Chancellor Street in 1988.⁶ By 1991 the gym had changed its name and no longer wanted to be listed as a gay site.⁷ Club Body Center was operating from the 1970s until it closed in 1989; today that address hosts Club Philly.

Sansom Street Gym on 2020 Sansom Street is one of the newer bathhouses. Before it was the Sansom Street Gym it was called the World Gym, which was also listed in the gay guides used by the LGBT community to advertise LGBT friendly sites. Between 1971 and 1977, the Barracks was open at 1813 Sansom Street in a dark commercial building and was popular among college students.⁸ Meanwhile, Camac Baths operated next to 12th Street Gym. Drucker's Bellevue Bath was entered in the gay guides under the Bellevue Bath and Bellevue Club. It operated between 1965 and 1987.⁹ The 12th Street Gym, though a family gym, purportedly has a men's gym in the basement and was first listed under baths, saunas, and gyms in 1994.¹⁰ Finally, a few baths such as LR Fitness, a 24-hour gym at 105 Sansom Street, and Philly Jacks on

4 See Lizabeth Cohen, *A Consumer's Republic*, and Manuel Castells and Karen Murphy, "Cultural Identity and Urban Structure."

5 International Guild Guide: Delaware, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, 1965 (Washington, DC: Guild Book Service: 1965), 81.

6 *Bob Damron's Address Book* (San Francisco: Bob Damron Enterprises, 1988).

7 *Gay Yellow Pages: The National Edition USA & Canada* (Miami: Blue Boy, 1989), 225.

8 *Gay Yellow Pages: The National Edition USA & Canada* (Miami: Blue Boy, 1977), 92.

9 *Gay Yellow Pages: The National Edition USA & Canada* (Miami: Blue Boy, 1978), 225.

10 *Bob Damron's Address Book* (San Francisco: Bob Damron Enterprises, 1994).

1318 Walnut Street were listed for about a year but then disappeared. Philly Jacks still exists as a group that gathers a few times a month for mutual masturbatory, non-penetrative parties for men. During this time Philly Jacks puts a sign on the door of 1318 Walnut Street indicating their presence, but at other times there is no indication that they are renting the space. However, they do operate an online sex store year round.¹¹

The aforementioned baths operated within the bounds of the Gayborhood or on its periphery. Only the Sansom Street Gym, the Barracks, and the Bellevue Turkish Court Baths are outside the defined area of the neighborhood. However, these buildings, like many of the Philadelphia baths, cannot be identified as bathhouses by the public at large.¹² From the exterior, few of the baths demonstrate evidence that there is or ever was a bath in operation at the site. Furthermore, most of the baths are accessible from side entrances or quiet streets. Baths on Camac Street and Chancellor Street illustrate this point. The streets are small alleyways large enough for a single car with no parking and few pedestrians, and many entrances face commercial garbage bins and delivery access points. However, there is enough traffic on these roads that it is not unusual to see pedestrians on the sidewalks.

Implications for Preservation

The survey from chapter four gives insights into different ways of understanding the bathhouses in light of their urban context, building scale, and interior details. However, without concrete ideas about what preservation means, it is hard to understand how the survey can be important when thinking about preserving bathhouses or other similar queer sites. Preserving a bathhouse requires discussion of the types of philosophies to use, combining the history of bathhouses, established theories of how to practice preservation, and the survey results.

¹¹“The Philadelphia Jack,” last accessed April 22, 2015, <http://www.philadelphiajacks.com/home.html#sitemap>.

¹² The Bellevue Turkish Court Baths is located inside the Bellevue-Stratford Hotel. It is not a non-descript building, and yet like the Hale Building it can host a bath without attracting much attention. These buildings, unlike several other buildings that became or housed bathhouses, were not built by famous architects like Gaylord Hale or the Hewitt brothers.

How can the preservation of bathhouses be managed in the twenty-first century? There are several considerations in the preservation and adaptive reuse of bathhouses. However, I will make several broad recommendations based on this research. First, the stories associated with bathhouses are important to the public and the community and should not remain hidden and continually marginalized. Second, the physical elements should be approached in a manner that is sensitive to the past and present situation of the bathhouse. Third, the nature and type of the bathhouse, though important, were flexible. While concrete characteristics can be associated with particular types of bathhouses, some aspects of the baths changed over time or were fleeting while others remained constant. As a result, preservation of a bathhouse requires an understanding of bathhouse type as well as an individualized evaluation. Fourth, considering bathhouses forces us to go beyond the traditional bounds of preservation, and queer theory can be used as a framework to reconsider the ways we approach history. Queer preservation should highlight alternative methods of preservation such as blogging about place and community and community dialogue such as through public histories. However, gay baths should also utilize tools used by planners and professional preservationists like landmarking status for both the interior and the exterior.

Because bathhouses belong to a community with a history of discrimination and marginalization, it is important to consider what it means to bury the narrative of a bathhouse – whether intentionally or unintentionally. Philadelphia bathhouses, similarly to the tobacco mills and warehouses on Tobacco Row in Richmond, Virginia, are part of much larger stories that should not be muted. The Tobacco Row buildings are part of a narrative of working-class lives of the employees in the tobacco factory. The factories are also important to the history of Richmond, which was once the capital of the tobacco industry in the United States. However, the preservation of the factories, according to Daniel Bluestone, did little to include the narrative of the way the

factories functioned. The preservation choices made at Tobacco Row made it harder to tell the stories of the marginalized communities that lived and worked there. Rehabilitation of the factories erased the layout of the factory floor, which demonstrated the processes of the tobacco industry. Worker homes, which were once important to the character of the neighborhood and housed the factory employees, were demolished. In making the tobacco factories into apartments, much of the evidence of working-class life was removed from the buildings to make room for amenities that would accommodate an upper-middle class lifestyle. Bluestone argues that preservation of such buildings should be approached in a sensitive way that does not erase the narrative of place or compromise architectural integrity.¹³

Intentionally effacing the rich history of the LGBT community does a disservice to the queer community. It reinforces the stigma that the homosexual community faced in policing of baths, bars, restaurants, and theaters. Furthermore, such erasure continues to keep gays on the margins. Because the bathhouses give an overarching narrative of early twentieth century gay urban history, the physical preservation of baths can play a critical role in understanding the history of the gay community and the development of urban geographies. Communication of the bathhouse narrative using available fabric can also help elucidate the current socio-political roles of the gay community.¹⁴ Maintaining heritage in physical form is important for forming better relationships with past and present, as well as developing a sense of community and collective identity.

Although retaining the entire interior and exterior form of the bathhouse as it once was may not be possible in many rehabilitation projects, it is essential to not undercut the sense of place and function of a bath, which can provide an educational opportunity.¹⁵ One element to consider in the preservation of bathhouses is the re-

¹³ Daniel Bluestone, "Tobacco Row: Heritage, Environment, and Adaptive Reuse in Richmond, Virginia," *Change Over Time* Vol. 2 No. 2 (Fall 2012): 132-154.

¹⁴ Bluestone, 134.

¹⁵ Bluestone, 136.

lationship of the building to the neighborhood. Would the project compromise the connection of the building with the surrounding neighborhoods, streets, or businesses? Taking measures to limit these changes might be appropriate. Would the project alter the design of the bath entirely? Are there feasible ways to maintain some of the bathhouse plans? Would the features and details (tangible and intangible) of the bathhouse be lost? If so, are there alternative ways to preserve them without detracting from the new use of the building?

All of these questions are difficult to answer because the design of the bathhouse is so use-specific. For example, preserving features of a bath might be hard for a developer who wants to convert a floor of a building that was a bath into a hotel. At the same time, erasure of the memories of the queer communities who appropriated that space to express their sexual identity when other environments were hostile to homosexuals is a regressive act. Expunging experiences of any socially, politically, or economically marginalized community reinforces stigmatizing practices and only works to hegemonize a democracy rather than supporting the healthy plurality that the system needs.

Maintaining portions of the bathhouses can be used as a focal point for the gay community in creating memories or even furthering knowledge. At the very least, such preservation could increase connections between various marginalized communities.¹⁶ Writing about the bathhouses could create dialogue or help elucidate the history of the queer community in terms of a pre- and post-AIDS era instead of a pre- and post-Stonewall dichotomy. While places that have not been altered would provide the strongest communication between past and present, it is rare for a site such as a bathhouse to remain unchanged. Having a bathhouse completely preserved would make it easy to tell the story and function of the bathhouse, while a partially preserved bathhouse leads to difficulty in creating a deeper dialogue about the history

¹⁶ Kaufman, 43.

of the gay bathhouses and how it relates to the current LGBT story. Giving bathhouses public recognition would create critical dialogue about the LGBT community by forcing the public to go beyond the discussion of gays and lesbians assimilating into a heteronormative society, to a deeper history of how queer communities developed in the shadows and what some characteristics of those communities were. Preserved bathhouses could serve as a teaching tool, one that could provide more agency to LGBT people.¹⁷

In considering periodization of bathhouses, the best framework that exists is the one outlined in chapter three, rooted in the work of Allan Berubé: the development of the bath from an ordinary bathhouse, to a favorite spot, to an early modern bathhouse, to a modern bathhouse. This framework is the only existing structure for categorizing bathhouses historically, socially, and architecturally. As discussed in chapter three, ordinary bathhouses had little or no gay association and existed prior to the nineteenth century. Favorite spots were spaces appropriated by gay men for gay sex and existed from the end of the eighteenth into the early twentieth century. Early modern bathhouses catered to gay men and existed largely in the early twentieth century before World War Two. Modern gay baths developed as a result of social and economic trends in the post-war era.

It is vital that preservationists consider the type of architectural features important to a bathhouse and their affiliation with type. The location of a bath is important for reasons outlined in chapter two and clarified in chapter four. Knowing whether the bathhouse is located in a Gayborhood near other LGBT commercial spaces is imperative because urban, capitalistic, and LGBT historic trends, as elucidated in earlier chapters, impact the narrative of the bathhouse. Furthermore, the history of the surrounding neighborhood and whether it was marginalized, as well as economic and city planning trends, are critical for understanding the narratives of favorite

¹⁷ Kaufman, 117.

spots, early modern gay baths, and modern baths. Preservationists should look at the location of a bath in terms of visibility. Did the building have an obvious presence; was it easy to access; was it located in a red-light or entertainment district; and was the entrance on a busy road or a more discreet thoroughfare? These are all questions that need to be answered because they are key to the narrative, social value, and community history of the bathhouses. These questions will be answered differently on a case by case basis. For example, early modern baths may not be as discreet as favorite spots. Furthermore, modern baths may be in very popular spaces, but still be plain in design.

Chapter three argued that architectural developments of the American gay bathhouse were tied to historical change. Specific features were solidified in chapter four with the survey, though the questions concentrated on modern baths from the 1960s, 70s, and 80s. The results described the non-descript exterior appearance and placed emphasis on the inside, especially with early modern and modern gay bathhouses. On the interior, design professionals should examine the flow of the plan. Access points to the bathhouses are critical for all types of baths, from ordinary to modern. The floor plan became more deliberately designed over time. It was intentionally mazelike in modern gay baths, but was coincidentally mazelike in early modern gay baths. The difference was that the early modern baths' design allowed for sex between men to occur, while the modern gay baths were actually designed for sex. Most importantly, the water features, individual rooms, and locker rooms were vital to the function of the favorite spots, early modern, and modern baths, allowing for a mixture of public and private space as well as community development. Finally, features unique to bathhouses that could be found in some early modern baths, such as glory holes and cots to rent for sex, must be recognized. Gyms, condom machines, specialized porn theaters, and rooms designed for acting out sexual fantasies, all a result of commodification as described in chapter two, were significant to the development of

gay bathhouses in response to social trends in the latter half of the twentieth century.

The features of the following case studies will be analyzed based on the above proposed considerations as well as the notable features ranging from large scale to minute design details. It is essential that landmarking and other traditional tools be considered because the design, location, and function of bathhouses are central to key historic events and the development of urban centers and gay community. A mix of traditional and non-traditional preservation practices should be considered in light of the narratives told by the bathhouses as described in chapters two and four. Bathhouses are unique in that they can tell a distinctive story about urban gay development in the twentieth century, and landmarking, placing signs, and writing papers and journal articles helps to legitimize the broader patterns of this narrative. However, when bathhouses represent a single neighborhood or local issues, a blog post, media response, or community event would be more appropriate. While bathhouses are unique in character, different from other types of gay commercial spaces that help tell larger stories, well-preserved interiors have the opportunity to be architecturally and historically enlightening and thus should not be discounted for landmarking or other forms of preservation. Finally, it is most important that the critical questions outlined above are asked when approaching preservation of bathhouses because these questions can help expand diversity, inclusion, and democracy in preservation, which in turn will help change the definition of public space.

201 South Camac Street: Camac Baths

Some of the oldest LGBT sites in the city are located on Camac Street. One of them is the Venture Inn, which originally opened as a tearoom in 1919. Venture Inn became a resting spot for visitors in the early twentieth century during the pre-war era. Venture's then-owner, Blanche James, worked with two local women who ran a nearby bookstore and gardens in the building that became Camac Center, later

known as Camac Athletic Center.¹⁸ In 1929, Alexander Lucker bought the building and turned it into a bathhouse complete with pools, steam rooms, a gym, and a barber-shop. The bathhouse acted as a community gathering place, mostly for men, though it was open to men and women.¹⁹ Camac Baths provided a place for the growing eastern European Jewish population in Philadelphia around that time. It was a place for a “shvitz” or steam bath.²⁰ Men could have several types of baths and massages there in the 1930s.²¹ Later posters offered gym courses, Turkish and Russian Baths, Alcohol



Figure 5.3. Camac Center, Corner of Chancellor and Camac Street, Google Images

18 Bob Skiba, “. . . and what about the Venture Inn?,” *The Philadelphia Gayborhood Guru*, last updated October 8, 2012, last accessed March 9, 2015, <https://thegayborhoodguru.wordpress.com/tag/camac-baths/>.

19 “Camac Center,” *12th Street Gym*, last accessed, February 8, 2015, <http://www.12streetgym.com/camac.html>. Mostly men went to the Camac Baths as a social activity and community event. Women were able to go as well for health and fitness, but the part of the building for women was considerably smaller and was only open three days a week. Also, like earlier baths, Camac remained gender segregated.

20 “Shvitz” became a popular word for steam baths in the 1930s. The word originates from both Yiddish *shvitsn*, to sweat, and old German *sweitzen*.

21 Harry Brooks, *A Family Secret* (Bloomington, IN: Xlibris Corporation, 2005), 17.

Rubs, and overnight sleep for 1 dollar.²² The lower floors purportedly housed dining facilities and a locker room type area. The upper floors (fourth and fifth) acted as a boarding house, probably to help immigrants coming to the area who needed support transitioning to their new life. Before the upgrades of the 1950s, the Camac Bath had a large 25 foot by 25 foot steam room that reached temperatures of up to 180 degrees Fahrenheit. Long before the bathhouse came to be frequented by homosexuals, Jewish men and other immigrants would meet there for social gatherings and relaxation. Harry Brooks, an amateur writer, wrote in a novel based on a South Philadelphia family, "The guys would meet at the bathhouse, play cards, take a steam, play some-old fashioned handball, eat a salami sandwich, sleep for a couple of hours on an uncomfortable cot, and go home on Sunday morning."²³ Over time as the Camac Baths developed from a Jewish community center to an athletic club, several of the interior architectural and detail features changed.

Though Camac Baths remained important for the Jewish community until the 1980s, the clientele changed over time. The bath increased in popularity after the 1950s due to interior changes. When Alexander Lucker retired in the 1950s, his sons took over. Aaron Lucker, who graduated from the Wharton School of Business at the University of Pennsylvania, began updating the building.²⁴ Lucker added a full-size swimming pool, new weight room, and racquetball courts, earning the gym a masculine reputation.²⁵ The bath was often visited by locals and travelers during this time, with adventures recorded by the author Christopher Isherwood, students from Haverford College, and travelers from New York. The men cruised the building and sometimes spent the night.²⁶ Camac Baths went out of business as a shvitz in the 1990s

22 Ron Avery, "12 Street Gym is Great, but it Used to Be the Shvitz," *HiddenCity Philadelphia*, November 19, 2014, last accessed February 8, 2015, <http://hiddencityphila.org/2014/11/12th-street-gym-is-great-but-it-used-to-be-the-shvitz/>.

23 Brooks, 18.

24 Sally Downey, "A. Lucker, 89; owned health club," *Philadelphia Inquirer*, June 6, 2009.

25 Sally Downey, "A. Lucker, 89, owned health club."

26 Dayton Lummis, *Ramblin' Bob* (Bloomington: Thinstock, 2012), 209.

when the cost of maintaining round-the-clock staffing to keep the baths competitive became overwhelming. Camac Baths then served as Penguin Community Center from 1990 to 1997. The building housed counseling, support groups, a coffee house, a library, archives, and youth programs for the LGBT community.²⁷ In the late 1990s, the 12th Street gym, one of the largest gyms in the Philadelphia urban region, bought the Camac Center. The two buildings currently operate together. The Camac Center now has a variety of massage therapists, counseling services, and chiropractors.

Key Details

The history of Camac Baths aligns with the narrative of marginalization and development of the Gayborhood. Camac is a less traversed street in the heart of the Gayborhood, which as previously mentioned in chapter two was important to the development of baths. Camac Street is also one of the streets in the neighborhood associated with art communities during the pre- and post-war era. The Camac Center is a five story white stucco brick building located on the southeast corner of the intersection of Camac and Chancellor Street, both one-way streets that have remained unpaved, with cobblestone still visible. The sidewalks are narrow, although there are a few small trees lining the street. The location of Camac Street and its non-descript architecture highlights the discreetness described by participants in the survey, and also demonstrates how inconspicuous early modern baths were in relation to the larger urban landscape.

In the entrance of Camac Center there is a white tile floor, running partway up the walls. There is no security or concierge type desk located near the entrance. To the right there is a staircase leading to the second floor, and to the left there is a quarter staircase leading to the rest of the first floor. The staircases change from marble on the lower floors to wood on the higher levels. The ceramic tile continues from the first to the second floor. There are three staircases in the building, with one located on the

²⁷ "History of the Center," William Way LGBT Community Center, last updated January 2015, last accessed February 9, 2015, http://www.waygay.org/v2/about/history_of_the_center.

southwest corner of the building, another on the middle of the south wall, and the last one on the middle of the north wall of the building. On the first, second, and third floor there are offices for therapists, masseuses, hairdressers, and the like. A gym and spa are located on the first floor on the west side of the building. The hallways are zigzagged in an angular pattern. There is an art gallery on the fourth floor and offices on the fifth floor. The floors are wooden on the upper floors and the hallways remain angular, narrow, and dim. Smaller rooms are located on the exterior windowed walls of the building. Many of the rooms have been subdivided or expanded to accommodate the new business.

The Camac Baths is an example of a favorite spot - a bath that did not specifically target homosexual patrons, yet nonetheless attracted men seeking sex with men. It was a place where many men went to socialize, but its design also allowed for private sexual encounters. Later, when the bath became known as a "homosexual trysting spot" in the middle of the twentieth century, the upstairs cots provided a place for private sexual activity.²⁸ Camac Baths was frequented by straight men at first and then later catered to a mixed crowd. It did not appear in the gay guides like other Philadelphia baths, yet the bath had a variety of amenities including Russian and Turkish steam rooms. The building was never designed specifically for gay sex, but sex did occur in that space.

The location and exterior of the Camac Baths are consistent with archetypal bathhouses described by men in the survey for this thesis in chapter four. Like many favorite spots, the bath is in a relatively quiet area of Center City. It is in the heart of the Gayborhood, south of Walnut Street and north of Locust Street, and west of 12th street and east of 13th Street on a block divided by several smaller streets including St. James Street, Chancellor Street, and Camac Street. The layout and breadth of the street make it hard to navigate by automobiles. The bath grew up in this area shared

²⁸ Lumis, 209.

by Jews, immigrants, college students, and entertainment venues, possibly explaining the marginalization of the bath and its relationship to the local establishment Venture Inn, which “came out” publically in 1973, meaning that it went from being frequented by many homosexuals to being owned by an openly gay man.²⁹

The location of Camac Baths is optimal for maintaining a low profile. As Participant #7 wrote, “All[e]y facing [baths] were always best.” Furthermore, like other bathhouses described by survey responders, Camac Baths has a relatively low profile, with no fancy ornamentations on the exterior calling attention to the building. Camac Baths had “non-descript entrances” that made “the experience less ‘shameful’ for people” who wanted to maintain discretion.³⁰ While the exterior of the bath is unobtrusive, the building was known to be a bath. Even though they were in a busy area, the street and bath were not prominent, and the building blended into the neighborhood. The success of Camac Baths may also be explained by the arrangement of the interior and the wealth of features that the bath offered. As mentioned previously, the interior underwent several renovations in the 1950s to attract a wider clientele and for modernization. However, the actual impact of the interior features must be surmised, as few indications of past floor plans are still visible or available in records.

Preservation Strategies

While Camac Center is not threatened and is currently occupied, it may provide an example of how to approach the preservation of a “favorite spot.” The building, unless demolished, cannot physically be removed from the neighborhood. Even in the event of its demolition, the legacy of the Camac Bath as part of the homosexual community in the Gayborhood would live on in the collective memory of many men from that era. However, this memory should also be preserved because it is quickly fading for several reasons: many of the older gay men who visited this bath are aging,

29 Bob Skiba, “. . . and what about the Venture Inn?,” *The Gayborhood Guru*, October 8 2012, last accessed March 9, 2015, <https://thegayborhoodguru.wordpress.com/tag/camac-baths/>.

30 Participant 8 Survey (see Appendix).

Camac Baths is no longer used as a bathhouse, and few available records discuss the homosexual association of the bath. As discussed in the framework for preservation above, it is critical to consider the stories associated with Camac Baths, the physical elements, characteristics of the type, and non-traditional preservation tools.

The building's interior remains mazelike and feels like a bathhouse on the lower levels, but there are few other indications of the actual saunas, steam rooms, and cafes used when the bathhouse was in operation. Saunas and steam rooms are hallmarks of all bathhouse types. The exterior has been altered as well, so what is left to preserve? The history of the bathhouse's social life and interior design has not been well documented, but it is well known by several older gay men in Philadelphia and researchers of the gay community such as Bob Skiba. While there is no immediate threat to the Camac Center building, the design of the bath has been altered. The best way to preserve this bath and its story is to keep the building occupied by a responsible owner, one of the most fundamental preservation strategies. Additionally, the history of the bath should continue to be broadcasted via blogs, online articles, and media. Any change that does occur should be considered carefully in terms of function, ensuring that no large-scale or insensitive change occurs without a discussion of how that change would impact the building's previous importance and narrative, such as by calling attention to the building, as its modest design is key. Large-scale changes inconsistent with the character of the bath or the neighborhood would be insensitive. Furthermore, alterations or preservation methods that drastically changed the material condition of the building might also be insensitive. Changes should avoid destruction of the maze-like floor plan, or any change to the facade that would call attention to the building.

Given the prior discussion in chapters two through four and the framework for bathhouse preservation considerations outlined above, the building should remain non-descript, but functional for the type of business it houses. Interior changes should

carefully consider adjustment of floor plans, assuring that no large-scale changes alter the maze-like interior qualities that are essential to the function of baths. If at all possible, the tiling at the entrance and first level of the baths should remain intact. Finally, and most importantly, more attention should be given to the history of the baths in the public sphere.

Hale Building: The Bellevue Baths



*Figure 5.4. Exterior Hale Building
Courtesy of Michael Burlando*

The Hale Building is different from the Camac Baths in that it was designed by a well-known architect and the architecture of the building has had considerable press since its construction. While the location could be viewed as an apparent violation of the rule that baths are ordinary and non-descript, the bath remains obscure. Furthermore, the discreet placement of the entrance sign on Juniper Street reflects the need for gay places to remain invisible. In addition, the Hale Building remains attached to Juniper and Locust Streets, home to art and prostitution districts during the post-war period. Additionally, the existence of a gay bath in the building is not widely known, since there has been little discussion of the interior of the building until recently.

The Hale Building, also known as the Lucas Building, Penfield Building, Keystone National Bank Building, and the Juniper Hotel, is listed under 1326-1328 Chestnut Street, 100-120 Juniper Street, and 1325-1327 Sansom Street. It was designed by the Philadelphia architect Willis Gaylord Hale. Built in 1887, the building received mixed reviews; some called it an architectural genius while others called it ugly. Hale, who was known for his bold designs, implemented several different architectural elements into the Hale Building as well as other commissioned buildings that he created in Philadelphia. The daring designs of his projects led many of his buildings to be abandoned or demolished because they were considered incongruent with the Philadelphian urban landscape.³¹ Architectural critics called the Hale Building “irrational, incongruous, and ridiculous,” brandishing such adjectives as “higgledy-piggledy.”³²

The Hale Building hosted several important businesses before its abandonment in 2009. The building first operated as The Keystone Bank until the bank failed in 1891, shortly after Hale’s death. Chemical manufacturer and one of the largest de-

31 C. Doebley, “1326-28 Chesnut Street.” *Pennsylvania Historic Resource Survey*. (Harrisburg: Pennsylvania Historical & Museum Commission, 1981), 1. G.A. Woodward, *Philadelphia and Its Environs: A Guide to the City and Surroundings* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Company 1889), 39. See also Kevin Wohlgemuth, “Compromising the Hale Building: Contention vs. Concession in Preservation,” Term Paper HSPV 660 (December 2012): 2.

32 Montgomery Schuyler, “The Record Building,” *Architectural Record Architectural Aberration* No. 10 (October-December 1893), 261-264.

velopers in the United States at the time, William Weightman, bought and redesigned the Hale Building. The alterations included a makeover of the building's front facade by 1909, when the building hosted the Garrick Theater. The entranceway underwent several designs between Weightman's ownership in the early 1900s and the 1970s. The Hale Building had a modern facade by the 1950s, when the building was still a part of a shopping district. The area became "seedy," or associated with homosexuals, in the 1960s and 1970s, as demonstrated in chapter two.³³ Because the building is



Figure 5.5. Drucker's Bellevue Health Baths Sign From Joe Williams

³³ Maria Gorshin, "Crude, Violent, & Revolting," *HiddenCity*, March 7, 2012, last accessed April 22, 2015, <http://hiddencityphila.org/2012/03/crude-violent-revolting/>.

eclectic and awkwardly composed, its style is hard to classify, in keeping with 1880s individualism in a city dominated with work by Frank Furness. The design of the entranceway constantly changed in an attempt to keep it fashionable.

New owners commissioned varying designs of the building's front and expansions of the building towards Sansom Street. Between 1890 and 1891 the building was extended to Sansom Street, with additional alterations in 1892 and 1900, all done by the original architect. As the city entered a decline, the commercial corridor on Chestnut Street waned as well. A parade of tenants cycled through the building, including a variety of shops on the first and second floors, Bellevue Baths on the fourth floor, and most recently the Valu-Plus store on the first floor. The Valu-Plus store was forced to close in 2009 after a prolonged recession.



Figure 5.6. Check-in Counter of Bellevue Baths Courtesy of Michael Burlando

After the building lost its last tenant, Barzilay Development and JKR Partners, LLC presented a plan that would turn the Hale Building into a hotel, with multi-million dollar renovations. Barzilay, an experienced architect familiar with the use of historic preservation tax credits, presented several plans to the Historic Preservation

Commission. Following the public announcement of the plans, many Philadelphians expressed approval of the designs. Most comments on websites regarding the possibility of rehabilitating the Hale Building into a hotel applauded the restoration effort with comments like “I do love the building” and “I hope this building is taken care of.”³⁴ Despite positive public feedback, the historic preservation commissioners viewed the first proposals as inappropriate, arguing that the project’s design for the Chestnut Street entrance was not compatible with the historic fabric.³⁵ Negotiations between the developers and Historical Commission resulted in a deadlock. The developers, frustrated that their plans did not receive approval after several iterations, withdrew support from the project in 2010 and no further meetings occurred between the historic commission and the developers. In early 2015 contractors erected scaffolding along Juniper Street after loose material separating from the building resulted in a citation from the city.³⁶

Key Details

The Hale building is a large, eight story, stone building about 18 feet in width on the Chestnut Street side and about 100 feet in length on the Juniper Street side. Though the interior of the building is difficult to access and the plans are not widely distributed, several basic drawing sets show what the interior of the building might look like today. The basement plan clearly shows the original footprint of the building before it was elongated to reach Sansom Street in 1891. The Chestnut Street facade has a modern tiled front extending to the third floor, elaborate stonework, and large windows, balconies, towers, and columns decorating the upper floors. The first floor

³⁴ Sbethy, “The Hale Building 1326-1328 Chestnut Street,” Blog history’s aesthetic, September 15, 2011, last accessed February 9, 2015, <https://historysaesthetic.wordpress.com/2011/09/15/the-hale-building-1326-1328-chestnut-street/>. See also Maria Gorshin, “Crude, Violent, and Revolting,” *HiddenCity Philadelphia*, March 12, 2012, last accessed February 9, 2015, <http://hiddencityphila.org/2012/03/crude-violent-revolting/> and Michael Burlando, “What the Hale is in There?,” *HiddenCity Philadelphia*, March 7, 2012, last accessed, <http://hiddencityphila.org/2012/03/what-the-hale-is-in-there/>.

³⁵ Philadelphia Historic Commission, 12 February 2010, Corrected, 9.

³⁶ “Permit 583105, 1326 Chestnut Street Philadelphia, PA” *City of Philadelphia*, last accessed February 9, 2015, <http://www.phila.gov/data/Pages/default.aspx?entity=permits&eid=583105>.



Figure 5.7. Bellevue Baths' Locker Room Courtesy of Michael Burlando



Figure 5.8. Turkish Steam Room Entrance Courtesy of Michael Burlando

opens into a large atrium. The first four fifths of the building towards Chestnut Street are open space, while the last one fifth is clearly designed for service use and provides access to the basement as well as the upper floors. The second floor is accessible by stairs in the middle of the north side of the building. This floor also has large rooms meant for social or retail space. A hallway runs the length of the north wall of the building. Three smaller rooms appear behind the large main room, and each opens out to a balcony on the Juniper Street or east side of the building. The third floor again has large rooms for community, retail, or office space, seemingly accessible by two stairs. There are eleven rooms of varying sizes. The fourth floor has a very different layout from the other floors. There are two stairways in the north and south walls, several rooms to access the balcony, and a variety of freestanding walls that clearly have no loadbearing function. There are seven four sided figures drawn in the middle of the floor. The fifth and sixth floors look much like the second floor, with indications of possible office space or rooms for rent. The seventh and eighth floors, while they vary slightly in their plans, have smaller rooms for residential, office, or hotel space.

The Bellevue Baths were located on the fourth floor of the Hale Building. Developer drawing plans for the fourth floor indicate several locations where the contractors noted that plumbing fixtures and related equipment, including furnishings, should be removed. Demolition instructions state to salvage marble slab and provide it to the owner for reuse if possible. The southeast corner of the fourth floor plans show a platform and existing frame, corresponding to the location of a photograph showing the entrance of the bath. The entrance is framed by faux-wood paneling, which was popular in the mid-century, surrounding a Plexiglas window similar to those seen in a movie theater ticketing booth. Here patrons would show their identification and check in.

Directly behind the check-in counter is a large locker room with white and gray linoleum flooring, yellow and white tiling on the walls, and benches. Several rows

of benches and lockers are located in this area. Some lockers contain addresses, pictures of muscular male models, and advertisements. Steam rooms opposite the lockers and benches are labeled Turkish Steam and Finnish Steam. Proceeding further south, there is a large room divided into several quadrangular type rooms, with walls that do not extend to the ceiling. The quadrangular rooms are each large enough for a cot and have holes at waist level, evidently for oral sex. Cots, presumably placed in rooms for rent, now remain in the hallway with green carpet and black walls, collecting dust. Features on this level such as a condom dispenser, personal lubricant, a soda and snack vending machine, poppers, and pornographic photos give a sense of the atmosphere of the bath.

Preservation Strategies

Preservation of the Bellevue Baths and Hale Building is complicated by the elaborate review process required to insert new fabric into designated historic buildings. The city currently prefers to leave the Hale Building in an empty and deteriorating state rather than allow development and physical occupation. However, if this changes, future developers should consider the quality of the architecture, the history of the building, and the integrity of the interior of the building. Given the caliber of the architecture and the prominence of the architect, preserving the exterior of the Hale Building should be a high priority in any design plans. Despite recent citations received for deterioration of the Juniper Street exterior, from the ground level the facades appear to hold high architectural integrity, the Walnut Street entrance notwithstanding.

This seemingly deleterious situation could also be viewed as an opportunity if combined with a key piece of legislation. As of 1993 the Philadelphia Historic Commission can protect the interiors of Philadelphia's buildings. Based on the preliminary photographic evidence of the interior of the building, original decorations and furnishes are remarkably intact. This provides a rare opportunity to preserve interior

architecture crucial to the layout, function, and operation of a post-war early modern bathhouse. The rooms, cots, baths, and other floor plans are to date unaltered. Any preservation or designation of the interior should maintain the bathhouse characteristics as much as possible. Maintaining the status of a single floor of a building due to its historic importance is not uncommon. For example, during building renovations of the LGBT Center in Manhattan on West 13th Street, an entire floor used for ACT UP meetings in the 1980s and 1990s was preserved as it was at the time of the meetings.

Though it would be optimal to maintain the floor plans of the fourth floor bathhouse at a minimum, developers working on the Hale Building would most likely want to redesign the interior of the building on a large scale so that the building could be converted into an office building or hotel. If this were the case, plans could be made to salvage historic material and details when possible. The preservation of the Hale Building should not hinge on the fact that the design of the entranceway is not authentic to the original design and that debates have stymied development as discussed above. The best preservation strategy for the Bellevue Baths is to have the Hale Building occupied by a responsible owner who would partner with a qualified developer. Changes to the exterior should be minimal, except for aesthetic, stabilizing, and functional improvements. Alterations to the interior should be sensitive to the original historic features and if possible to the plans and use of the bathhouse. For example, the fourth floor of the Hale Building could be used as a spa for guests if the building were rehabilitated as a bath. However, alternative non-traditional strategies should be considered.

Other preservation options for the Bellevue Baths in the Hale Building include increasing media attention to the narrative of the building's use as a bathhouse. Several blog posts already exist about the debate over the entire building, but more attention could be given to the story of the early modern bathhouse in the Hale Building and how that relates to the larger narrative of Center City described in earlier chap-

ters of this thesis. In addition, maintaining the unique sign on the rear of the building advertising the Bellevue Baths on the 4th floor of the Hale Building is an ideal way to keep the bathhouse in the public sphere and provoke questions among passersby. The preservation of the sign would be a suitable compromise as it faces Juniper Street, a narrower side street to the east of the building, also critical to the nature of the early modern bathhouse.

Modern Baths:

The last baths to be discussed are different from the others in that they were designed specifically for a gay clientele, whereas early modern baths were designed for a patrons who were not necessarily seeking sex with other men. The Sansom Street Gym and Club Philly are examples of modern, post HIV/AIDS baths.

Sansom Street Gym

Sansom Street Gym is currently one of the two most popular baths in Philadelphia. It regularly advertises in *Philly Gay News* and holds events with local performers and celebrities. Before Sansom Gym opened, a World Gym operated from this location and was included as a gym in the gay guides.³⁷ For nearly a decade the bath has operated despite battling drug issues and declining membership. The manager of the Sansom Street Gym, Aaron Moore, says the bath has upgraded its facilities to help attract more business.³⁸ Despite the uncertainty of the business, the Sansom Street Gym is actively catering to its clientele, illustrating one of the changes that has been made

³⁷ *Yellow Pages: The National Edition USA and Canada for Gay Men and Women* (Miami, FL: Blue Boy, 2003), 447-448.

³⁸ Kim Glovas, "Many Bathhouses Receiving Upgrades to Attract More Customers," August 31, 2014, last accessed February 9, 2015, <http://philadelphia.cbslocal.com/2014/08/31/many-bathhouses-receiving-upgrades-to-attract-more-customers/>. It is worth noting that this article's argument that acceptance of gay marriage has caused the decline in gay bathhouse membership is absurd. It is true that there is a correlation between two separate sets of data, one showing the increased acceptance of homosexual relationships and marriage and the other showing the decline of bathhouse patronage. However, no studies have been done connecting the two sets of data to prove that in fact approval of gay relationships means an end for bathhouses. Furthermore, bathhouses were on the decline in the 1980s and 1990s at a time when homosexuality was far less acceptable than it is today. Baths are actually on the rise in popularity in many neighborhoods compared to nationwide statistics in the 1990s.

in baths since the 1970s. For example, as baths became more numerous in the 1970s and 1980s the number of advertisements increased. Similarly, amenities in various

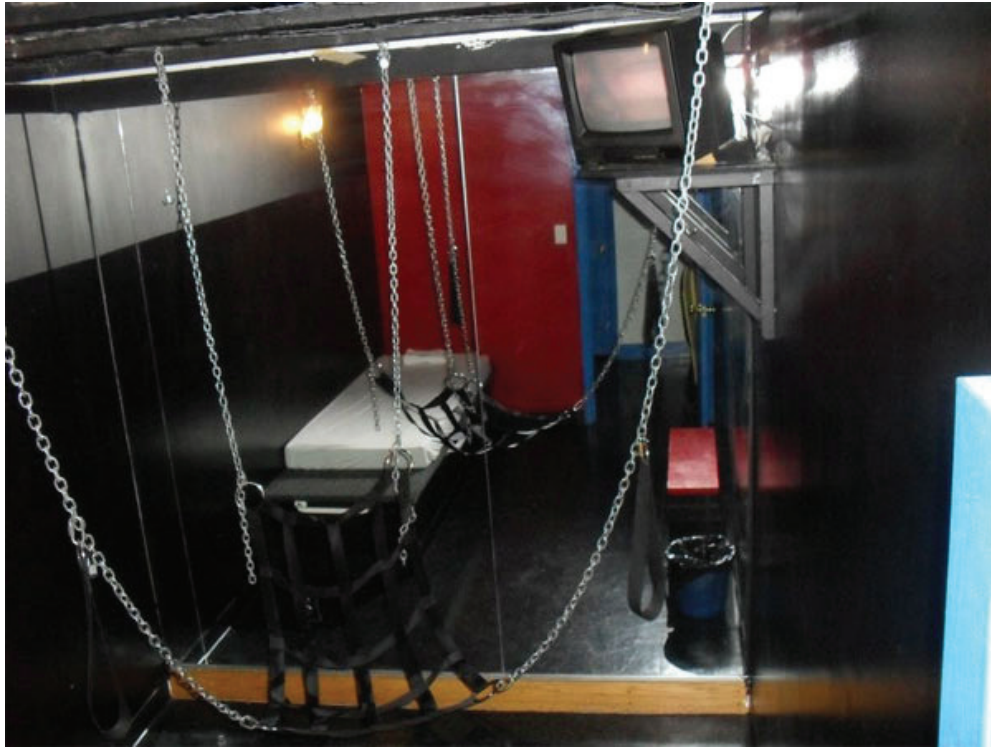


Figure 5.9. Sling Room at Sansom Street Gym from sansomstreetgym.com

facilities were emphasized in order to draw in larger numbers of patrons. The Sansom Street Baths and Club Philly highlight what they have to offer including the types of baths, rooms, saunas, and gym equipment.

Many patrons have debated the quality of Sansom Street Gym in terms of the number of rooms and type of men who frequent the establishment, mostly complaining about the temperature of the locker rooms and how previous floor plans impact the building's current use as a gay bath. For example, the building used to operate as a fitness center for both men and women, which meant that the facilities provided lockers for both genders. Patrons complain that having two large locker and shower areas separate from one another is distracting and say that they would much rather have

one large locker room.³⁹ Others have said that the Sansom Street Gym is very clean, but too bright and expensive, which impacts the “sexual vibe.”⁴⁰



*Figure 5.10. Sansom Street Gym Equipment Room
from sansomstreetgym.com*

Key Details

While Sansom Street Gym is still relatively new, it allows an analysis of a gay bathhouse that is currently in operation, with several images and reviews of a design whose fundamental qualities have not changed dramatically since the late 1970s. The Sansom Street Gym is a three story building on Sansom Street in the interior of two adjoining row houses, with white paint and green trim, that have been converted for commercial use. Two small bay windows flank the doors in the center of the building. The doors are recessed under a flat roof portico. Each floor has four double hung

³⁹ Review: Sansom Street Gym, *Cruising Gays City Hookup Guide*, last updated January 1, 2009, last accessed February 9, 2015, <http://www.cruisinggays.com/philadelphia/gyms/40150-sansom-street-gym/>.

⁴⁰ Twotopmen, Sansom Street Gym in Philadelphia, *breeding zone*, October 12, 2012, last accessed February 9, 2015, <https://breeding.zone/topic/14251-sansom-street-gym-in-philadelphia/>.

windows. The building has remained non-descript for decades, again a characteristic of most baths from favorite spots to modern baths. It is near the Gayborhood in a neighborhood marginalized and influenced by urban revitalization and other post-war trends that affected urban geographies.

The social areas on the interior appear to be on the first floor. These include a dance room and bar. There is also a brightly lit kitchen on the first floor as well as two bright locker room areas with individual and group showers. Individual rooms with beds for rent are on the second and third floors. These floors also include a theater room with winged-back chairs that look like typical family room furniture. There is also a gym that is darker, painted black, and includes a variety of machines. Finally, the upper floors include a steam room and a deck where patrons can relax during nice weather. These features demarcate the impact of consumerism on gay commercial spaces discussed in chapter two. Furthermore, the inclusion of porn theaters, specific rooms for group or private sex, and large social areas that include bars are telling signs that this bath is a modern bath catering specifically to a gay clientele. Modern baths, compared to favorite spots and early modern baths, responded to key trends in the gay community. The importance of physicality in the gay community and use of pornography are two characteristics that inform the design of the modern bath. Moreover, the attention given to details like the water features is also a stamp of the modern bathhouse. Though water features such as steam rooms, baths, and saunas were important to both favorite spots and early modern bathhouses, the attention given to the variety and quality differ. Over time water features became much more elaborate and sexually focused.

Club Philly

Club Philly rivals Sansom Street Gym for business. As outlined previously, the building has housed a series of gay baths since the 1970s. Prior to the current occupation, the site hosted Back Street Baths (which operated at the site in the mid-1980s)

and then Chancellor Athletic Club (which moved to the site in 1989).⁴¹ For many of the decades in the latter half of the twentieth century, the building has turned over frequently, traveling through the hands of several owners. Most recently, 1220 Chancellor Street was called Club Body Center, before it changed names to Club Philadelphia. Owner Chris Srnicek updated the facilities after a fire caused a quarter of a million dollars' worth of damage.⁴² Srnicek said that through his renovations he was trying to create a fantasyland so that clients could have experiences that they would not have at home. Once the renovations were finished the gym reopened in 2013 and has operated smoothly, with fewer drug related incidents, which previously threatened to close Club Philly (much like Sansom Street Gym) a few years ago.⁴³ Despite the crime and drug issues with Club Philly, it is an important bath for the gay community. Several couples who met at the bathhouse recently married in Philadelphia after Pennsylvania approved gay marriage.⁴⁴

Key Details

Club Philadelphia, like Sansom Gym, is located in two joined row houses with three stories; it is cream colored with green trim on the door and windows. This bathhouse is only a few steps away from the Camac Baths in the Gayborhood. Stone steps lead to a door with an arched transom above it. Similar to the Camac Baths and the Sansom Street Gym, the building is non-descript and in a less traversed area. The locality of the bath again is important: it is hardly distinguishable from other privately owned homes and businesses in the area except for the placement of an image of a shirtless, muscular man in the corner of the window.

The interior of the building is much crisper and more modern than that of the

41 *Bob Damron's Address Book* (San Francisco: Bob Damron Enterprises, 1988) and (San Francisco: Bob Damron Enterprises, 1987).

42 Brandon Baker, "Gayborhood Bathhouse Readies for its May Re-opening," *Philly Gay News (PGN)*, April 8, 2013, last accessed February 9, 2015, <http://www.phillymag.com/g-philly/2013/04/08/bathhouse-gayborhood//>

43 Baker, "Gayborhood Bathhouse Readies."

44 Ryan Kasley, "Wedding: Robert Mason and Larry Sechrist," *Philadelphia Gay News*, March 5, 2015.

Sansom Street Gym. Upon entering the building there is a counter check-in space with prices and events displayed on a high definition screen. An array of toys, lube, and condoms are also available for purchase. Behind the counter are a towel rack, staff room, and locker keys. The locker room is in an area with blue carpet and green walls with red lockers. There is a soda vending machine, along with benches and a television showing pornography just beyond the locker room, as well as a café and gym. There are polished wood floors throughout. Most of the walls are a dull yellow and the ceiling is white. There are several bathrooms and a variety of rooms available, as well as a dungeon-themed bathroom with a group shower and individual stalls in the basement. A large green and blue tiled shower is on the second floor, and there is also a second floor public bathroom. Themed rooms include a sling room, a room with glory holes, a dominatrix style room, a double sling dungeon room, a room with a tanning bed, a porn theater, a dry sauna, and smaller rooms to rent. Again, the commodification boom of the post-war era is reflected by the variety of options in the building. The plan, lighting, and other features reflect the trends set by the early modern baths and continued in modern baths. Furthermore, like the Sansom Street Gym, Club Philly has a condom dispenser. This detail is key to modern baths, not found in earlier baths that pre-date the HIV/AIDS epidemic. Other narratives can be found in the features and design of the club including the gym, arrangement of showers, and porn room, which echo the stories told by similar designs in the Sansom Street Gym.

Preservation Strategies

Not unlike Camac Baths and Bellevue Baths, the modern baths are discreet and located in the Gayborhood. Both baths have been described as dirty, seedy, and wet. The most important architectural features of the modern baths seem to be the finishes and decorations. Sansom Baths and Club Philadelphia are clearly in competition with one another, as indicated by the ads on both of the baths' websites as well as the advertisements placed in local gay papers such as *Philadelphia Gay News* and on

social media like Facebook and Twitter. Sansom Street posts daily on Facebook with pictures of muscular young men highlighting the different rooms in the building.⁴⁵ Because the interior designs, features, and amenities are articulated by historians, researchers, and patrons as the most important for these two baths, they are high priority in preservation. In addition, the more subtle importance of the unobtrusive exterior of the building must be maintained.

Though neither Sansom Gym nor Club Philadelphia is in danger of demolition, both could be subject to loss of revenue because of declining business. Therefore, in approaching possible preservation options, the baths should think about their roles in the public sphere, LGBT history, and the Gayborhood. Any future uses should maintain the floor plans of the baths as best as possible. Furthermore, the exterior of the buildings should remain non-descript with no additional ornamentation or decorations. Due to the importance of bathhouses for the gay community, the buildings and their interiors could be considered for possible nomination as places of importance either within the Gayborhood or as city landmarks. Finally, the story of the role that both baths play in the community should be explored.

Conclusion:

Philadelphia baths started in marginalized areas of Philadelphia, mostly in the Gayborhood. The baths took shape in a variety of forms, from buildings that were originally bathhouses, to architecturally significant buildings, to non-descript row houses and commercial buildings. In addition, most of the buildings that housed baths were located off of lightly traveled side streets. The buildings' location and architecture usually created an anonymity that allowed them to function as bathhouses. Both Camac Baths and the Bellevue Baths were located on side streets. The Camac Baths provided cover to men wishing to have sex with men because it was not advertised as a gay bath. The Bellevue Baths was a gentlemen's bath in a larger building, result-

⁴⁵ Sansom Street Gym Facebook Page, last accessed March 9, 2015, <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Sansom-St-Gym/121623927848108?rf=136178593116497>.

ing in an extra level of privacy. The two most recent baths gained discretion from the non-descript exteriors of the row houses that they have appropriated for commercial use. While the exterior varies, the concealment created by the location and architecture of bathhouse buildings is a quality that should be preserved, as it is important to the story of how gay men and gay bathhouses once functioned in marginalized spaces.

In thinking about preservation, conserving the floor plans and interior details like locker rooms, saunas, and rooms as they are without any alterations would be optimal. However, there needs to be room for flexibility and compromise with developers who want to change the function of bathhouses. A solution could be maintaining historic fabric as well as some footprint of the bathhouse, such as by reusing the baths as spas or gyms and keeping old signs or other parts of the baths. Furthermore, archiving material found in the building in local gay community centers is culturally responsible and should be encouraged. The material of bathhouses is a critical part of the gay community's history and should be preserved in both a physical and documented form. Finally, as a last measure if maintaining all or a portion of the bathhouse is incompatible with the project, documentation of a photographic, architectural, and historic nature should be deposited at the appropriate archival center as well as published on the Internet for public access.

Finally, local landmarking should be sought for some bathhouses. The Camac Baths and the Hale Building should be landmarked because of their importance in representing the gay bathhouse story in Philadelphia. This landmarking should occur in conjunction with local press. The stories of the bathhouses should be discussed in media, news, and academic circles so that they can become part of dialogue in the public sphere. Bathhouses were and are important to the gay community; they possess a history that helps elucidate the trends of LGBT American history; and they are threatened. Their stories should be shared and discussed to help further diversification in preservation and culture.

Conclusion

There's a history that a lot of bath visitors like to remember or feel like they are a part of. There's a definite culture which we no longer get to have due to apps and websites.

- Participant #8

The emerging emphasis on LGBT culture in the field of preservation faces new boundaries in the coming years. One of the major decisions will be what parts of the queer community should be preserved and how. This thesis demonstrates how bathhouses might be approached by preservationists. It brings together urban geographies, politics, queer theory, and architectural analysis to lay the groundwork for future practitioners.

Philadelphia's gay ghetto historically hosted many gay baths from the turn of the twentieth century to the present day. The boundaries of the ghetto at the urban core were defined by social and economic trends, namely suburbanization, consumerism, and city planning. The gay ghetto developed around white, educated, middle-class gay men. The redistribution of this landscape has not changed the fact that many of the earliest and most enduring baths are still found there. The location of baths must be paired with the study of the development of baths in the United States. In a way, the history of baths is the history of gay male culture in the United States. Baths developed from invisibility to being vital for community. Consumerism, sexual liberation, technology, and politics all influenced the design and types of gay baths.

The built environment, buildings, and histories of urban areas are so integrally tied that they cannot be separated. Thus the field of preservation should use the narrative of the bathhouse to create a more inclusive and democratic society. Individual assessment and scrutiny of baths, including their narratives and geography, should take place before development or preservation occurs. With tools from traditional forms of preservation along with newer ones, preservationists must create a dialogue in the public sphere. Bathhouses remain an important and underrepresented part of

the gay community and history. They are threatened and their stories must be shared.

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Appendix

1. To what extent do you see physical setting as important in the history of bathous

Unimportant
Somewhat Uni
Niether Unimp
Somewhat Imp

Notes: Essential

2. What ranking values would you assign to the character of each of the followin

a. surrounding neighborhood

Unimportant
Somewhat Uni
Niether Unimp
Somewhat Imp

Notes:

Historically part of gayborhood or in recent "warehouse" district

b. particular street

Unimportant
Somewhat Uni
Niether Unimp
Somewhat Imp

Notes:

N/A

c. position of buildings relative to their blocks (outward-facing, inward-facing alley-facing, e

Unimportant
Somewhat Uni
Niether Unimp
Somewhat Imp

Notes:

N/A

d. facades/exterior desig

Unimportant
Somewhat Uni
Niether Unimp
Somewhat Imp

Notes:

non-descript

e. plans/layout

Notes:

5	Unimportant Somewhat Uni Niether Unimp Somewhat Imp	For them to function successfully they have to be well throughout
---	--	---

f. finish/decoration/lighting of particular buildin

Notes:

4	Unimportant Somewhat Uni Niether Unimp Somewhat Imp	Important that it be clean, obvious to insitutions
---	--	--

g. intagible qualities/atmosphere of particular buildings ("it felt safe"), e

Notes:

5	Unimportant Somewhat Uni Niether Unimp Somewhat Imp	music and videos contribute to sexy atmposphere
---	--	---

3. What adjectives would you use to describe the interior design of bath

In reversal cramped and dark, skeevy

4. What adjectives would you use to describe the exterior of the bath

non-descript, bland

5. What adjectives would you use to describe the location of the bath

out of the way, side streets

1. To what extent do you see physical setting as important to the history of bathhouse

Unimportant
Somewhat Uni
Niether Unimp
Somewhat Imp

Notes: physical settings off streets, hidden slightly

2. What ranking values would you assign to the character of each of the followin

a. surrounding neighborhood

Unimportant
Somewhat Uni
Niether Unimp
Somewhat Imp

Notes:

Historically part of gayborhood or in recent "warehouse" district

b. particular street

Unimportant
Somewhat Uni
Niether Unimp
Somewhat Imp

Notes:

N/A

c. position of buildings relative to their blocks (outward-facing, inward-facing alley-facing, e

Unimportant
Somewhat Uni
Niether Unimp
Somewhat Imp

Notes:

N/A

d. facades/exterior design

Notes:

3

Unimportant
Somewhat Uni
Niether Unimp
Somewhat Imp

urbanfeel, advertisements

e. plans/layout

0

Unimportant
Somewhat Uni
Niether Unimp
Somewhat Imp

Notes:

N/A

f. finish/decoration/lighting of particular buildin

0

Unimportant
Somewhat Uni
Niether Unimp
Somewhat Imp

Notes:

N/A

g. intagible qualities/atmosphere of particular buildings ("it felt safe"), e

2

Unimportant
Somewhat Uni
Niether Unimp
Somewhat Imp

Notes:

N/A

3. What adjectives would you use to describe the interior design of bath

pinks, green, cheesy,

4. What adjectives would you use to describe the exterior of the bath

suburban

5. What adjectives would you use to describe the location of the bath

black, smei main,no nam,hidden

1. To what extent do you see physical setting as important to the history of bathhous

Unimportant
Somewhat Uni
Niether Unimp
Somewhat Imp

Notes:

Baths must provide the right mix of public private spaces to work, public space to mingle and meet, private space for sex

2. What ranking values would you assign to the character of each of the followin

a. surrounding neighborhood

Unimportant
Somewhat Uni
Niether Unimp
Somewhat Imp

Notes:

b. particular street

Unimportant
Somewhat Uni
Niether Unimp
Somewhat Imp

Notes:

c. position of buildings relative to their blocks (outward-facing, inward-facing alley-facing, e

Notes:

4

Unimportant
Somewhat Uni
Niether Unimp
Somewhat Imp

N/A

d. facades/exterior desig

Notes:

5

Unimportant
Somewhat Uni
Niether Unimp
Somewhat Imp

I think it's important that the bathhouse façade "blend into" or "disappear into" the surrounding neighborhood, UNLESS the bath is in the heart of a gay neighborhood, as some are/were. Even so, gay men rarely wanted to be seen going in to a baths, so the façades couldn't draw attention to themselves.

e. plans/layout

Notes:

5

Unimportant
Somewhat Uni
Niether Unimp
Somewhat Imp

N/A

f. finish/decoration/lighting of particular buildin

Notes:

2

Unimportant
Somewhat Uni
Niether Unimp
Somewhat Imp

N/A

g. intangible qualities/atmosphere of particular buildings ("it felt safe"), e

Notes:

2

Unimportant
Somewhat Uni
Niether Unimp
Somewhat Imp

Gay men will go into the worst areas without blinking an eye for sex

3. What adjectives would you use to describe the interior design of bath

maze-like, dimly lit

4. What adjectives would you use to describe the exterior of the bath

unobtrusive

5. What adjectives would you use to describe the location of the bath

discreet

1. To what extent do you see physical setting as important to the history of bathhouse

Unimportant
Somewhat Uni
Niether Unimp
Somewhat Imp

Notes: N/A

Empty text box for notes.

2. What ranking values would you assign to the character of each of the followin

a. surrounding neighborhood

4

Unimportant
Somewhat Uni
Niether Unimp
Somewhat Imp

Notes:

The actual location of these buildings usually says a lot about the history of LGBT acceptance within that place. Often bathhouses were founded in areas that were heavily populated with LGBT individuals on the sidelines of society.

b. particular street

2

Unimportant
Somewhat Uni
Niether Unimp
Somewhat Imp

Notes:

I think this is just about property values and where the cheapest place with the biggest space was.

c. position of buildings relative to their blocks (outward-facing, inward-facing alley-facing, e

2

Unimportant
Somewhat Uni
Niether Unimp
Somewhat Imp

Notes:

Most bathhouses try to be discrete and have more hidden entrances. Not sure if the actual positioning of the building was as important as which entrance for the building was used by patrons and employees.

d. facades/exterior desig

4

Unimportant
Somewhat Uni
Niether Unimp
Somewhat Imp

Notes:

Usually minimalist and trying not to give away too much as to what's inside.

e. plans/layout

5

Unimportant
Somewhat Uni
Niether Unimp
Somewhat Imp

Notes:

Really, really important. For many, this is what makes or breaks a bathhouse. I've got a bunch of great articles on the importance of space within the baths, and I'd be more than happy to send the references to you.

f. finish/decoration/lighting of particular buildin

Notes:

5

Unimportant
Somewhat Uni
Niether Unimp
Somewhat Imp

This is the core of the bathhouse. Porn videos, rooms, mazes, dark lighting, glory holes, warnings about sexually transmitted diseases, shower and other facilities. I think this tells you a lot about what the gay "fantasy" is supposed to be.

g. intangible qualities/atmosphere of particular buildings ("it felt safe"), e

Notes:

4

Unimportant
Somewhat Uni
Niether Unimp
Somewhat Imp

Mostly supposed to feel like an erotic space where LGBT activity is accepted.

3. What adjectives would you use to describe the interior design of bath

Grimy, dark

4. What adjectives would you use to describe the exterior of the bath

Discreet

5. What adjectives would you use to describe the location of the bath

Gay-friendly, outskirts of an urban area, removed

1. To what extent do you see physical setting as important to the history of bathhous

Unimportant
Somewhat Uni
Niether Unimp
Somewhat Imp

Notes: N/A

Empty notes box for the first item.

2. What ranking values would you assign to the character of each of the followin

a. surrounding neighborhood

Unimportant
Somewhat Uni
Niether Unimp
Somewhat Imp

Notes:

At least in the old days, bathhouses were in marginal – often dangerous – neighborhoods. If you were going there after dark, you always had to be careful.

Empty notes box for item a.

b. particular street

Unimportant
Somewhat Uni
Niether Unimp
Somewhat Imp

Notes:

N/A

Empty notes box for item b.

c. position of buildings relative to their blocks (outward-facing, inward-facing alley-facing, e

Unimportant
Somewhat Uni
Niether Unimp
Somewhat Imp

Notes:

You cared about what was going on inside. No one wanted to look at the windows. There were plenty of opportunities inside the bathhouse for guys who wanted to be watched. ;-)

Empty notes box for item c.

d. facades/exterior desig

Unimportant
Somewhat Uni
Niether Unimp
Somewhat Imp

Notes:

N/A

Empty notes box for item d.

e. plans/layout

Notes:

5

Unimportant
Somewhat Uni
Niether Unimp
Somewhat Imp

Very important for cruising areas, places to take breaks, places to have privacy, places to be watched by others, places to have 1-on-1 activity, places to have group sex, etc.

I think the best one I ever saw was The Ballpark in Denver, It had a 3-story waterfall, a truck located outside of the steamroom, several levels of rooms with doors facing the center and nice walkways.

f. finish/decoration/lighting of particular buildin

Notes:

5

Unimportant
Somewhat Uni
Niether Unimp
Somewhat Imp

Lighting extremely important. Bright enough to see faces in some areas, dark enough to be unable to see in others.

g. intagible qualities/atmosphere of particular buildings ("it felt safe"), e

Notes:

3

Unimportant
Somewhat Uni
Niether Unimp
Somewhat Imp

N/A

3. What adjectives would you use to describe the interior design of bath

Dark, dingy, often dirty

4. What adjectives would you use to describe the exterior of the bath

Nondescript.

5. What adjectives would you use to describe the location of the bath

Marginal areas.

1. To what extent do you see physical setting as important to the history of bathhous

Unimportant
Somewhat Uni
Niether Unimp
Somewhat Imp

Notes: N/A

2. What ranking values would you assign to the character of each of the followin

a. surrounding neighborhood

Unimportant
Somewhat Uni
Niether Unimp
Somewhat Imp

Notes:

mostly for safety

b. particular street

Unimportant
Somewhat Uni
Niether Unimp
Somewhat Imp

Notes:

Other than feeling safe and a degree of anonymity, the particular streets aren't terribly important.

c. position of buildings relative to their blocks (outward-facing, inward-facing alley-facing, e

Unimportant
Somewhat Uni
Niether Unimp
Somewhat Imp

Notes:

I think that having a bath with a physical degree of discretion is appreciated. Inward or alley facing aid in that.

d. facades/exterior desig

Notes:

3

Unimportant
Somewhat Uni
Niether Unimp
Somewhat Imp

nondescript or ones that blend in with the neighborhood are preferable so they don't advertise the purposes of those entering

e. plans/layout

5

Unimportant
Somewhat Uni
Niether Unimp
Somewhat Imp

Notes:

The physical layout does much to alter the feel and atmosphere of a bath house. They drive the kind of activity that occurs and the nature of the interactions of those wandering the halls, ranging from furtive to overly social.

f. finish/decoration/lighting of particular buildin

4

Unimportant
Somewhat Uni
Niether Unimp
Somewhat Imp

Notes:

Like the layout, the finishes of a building significantly affect the interactions. Take Steamworks in Chicago. It is a nice place to be in. Clean, modern/industrial. Compared with the Westside Club in NYC which is dirty, falling apart and very depressing.

g. intangible qualities/atmosphere of particular buildings ("it felt safe"), e

5

Unimportant
Somewhat Uni
Niether Unimp
Somewhat Imp

Notes:

Safety and a feeling of anonymity when entering the building are very important.

3. What adjectives would you use to describe the interior design of bath

dark, convoluted, conducive to physical interaction but not social

4. What adjectives would you use to describe the exterior of the bath

Non-descript and unknown to someone who isn't aware of what the building is.

5. What adjectives would you use to describe the location of the bath

The ones I have been to have been near or in gay centers and safe locations. I wouldn't go to one in a location that didn't feel safe. Not likely to go half-way across a city to go to one either.

1. To what extent do you see physical setting as important to the history of bathhouse

Unimportant
Somewhat Uni
Niether Unimp
Somewhat Imp

Notes: : Generally, a bathhouse had to be in a non-residential or iffy, perhaps even dangerous, neighborhood, although this has changed somewhat. So this led to many bathhouses being located in tawdry/criminal or warehouse areas. This also suited many of the customers, who did not want to be seen going in. The entrance was usually barely marked, and a first-timer many times would have to look pretty hard to find it. So this led to the charge by homophobes that gays frequented the seamy side of town, when in fact they had been exiled there. On the other hand, the noir-ish, knock-three-times and say Bruce-sent-you atmosphere had an erotic charge.

2. What ranking values would you assign to the character of each of the followin

a. surrounding neighborhood

Unimportant
Somewhat Uni
Niether Unimp
Somewhat Imp

Notes: Sometimes the baths could take on the character of their neighborhood. The Old St.Marks Baths in NYC (before the glitzy renovation by the Saint people) was in an ethnic enclave of Ukrainians, Italians and Jews, and it had an old world flavor. A lot of the "straight" clientele from its original days would frequent the gay floors on occasion, and it became known as a place where you had a good chance of being able to do some straight trade. This, in turn, attracted the type of clientele which got off on that. There was a similar situation in Chicago's Milwaukee Baths, set way off in the northwest on Milwaukee Avenue in a Polish section of town.

b. particular street

Unimportant
Somewhat Uni
Niether Unimp
Somewhat Imp

Notes:

N/A

c. position of buildings relative to their blocks (outward-facing, inward-facing alley-facing, e

Notes:

5	Unimportant Somewhat Uni Niether Unimp Somewhat Imp
---	--

Alley-facings were always best.

d. facades/exterior desig

Notes:

1	Unimportant Somewhat Uni Niether Unimp Somewhat Imp
---	--

No baths I've ever been to ever put any effort into façade or exterior design. On the contrary, it was consciously avoided. All the money went into the interior design.

e. plans/layout

Notes:

4	Unimportant Somewhat Uni Niether Unimp Somewhat Imp
---	--

Plans and layouts were most successful when they could be designed from scratch and not have to accommodate to previous use. In a successful gay baths, nooks and crannies where clientele could meet up were important. The rooms, on the other hand, were more desirable in highly trafficked areas. Some baths got in the habit of assigning undesirable, cul-de-sac rooms to anyone fat or old or otherwise considered a "troll" who dared to show up.

f. finish/decoration/lighting of particular buildin

Notes:

2	Unimportant Somewhat Uni Niether Unimp Somewhat Imp
---	--

Depends on what you're getting at here. There's virtually no importance to the outside of a gay baths, at times a deliberate effort was made to be almost invisible. The inside, on the other hand, mattered a great deal. Take the old Ritch St. Baths in San Francisco. It was sumptuously appointed, in a modern style, at one point having a wrap-around aquarium in the hot tub area. It was considered the best baths in SF and attracted the most interesting clientele

g. intangible qualities/atmosphere of particular buildings ("it felt safe"), e

Notes:

3	Unimportant Somewhat Uni Niether Unimp Somewhat Imp
---	--

All baths had some sort of ambience, and that ambience attracted particular sorts of clientele, although the most important thing was if the atmosphere contributed to you feeling sexy. Sometimes it seemed the scuzzier a building looked, the hotter a time it promised. Although after some fires, some people avoided places that looked like they might be fire traps.

3. What adjectives would you use to describe the interior design of bath

In later years, especially in California, eco-conscious design and “California natural” began to appear, and this attracted young people. It wildly varied, each had its own personality. Some went to great lengths to feature good design, some looked like they hadn’t been painted or thoroughly cleaned in decades. Smooth, carpeted, with soothing music, like the 21st St. Baths in SF. High style, like the new St. Marks in NYC. Fruity, like the Club Baths on First Ave. in Manhattan. Artificial. Two examples of that: there was once a multi-story baths on 15th St. near Union Square in NYC. They had actually imported a long truck trailer, such as the empty ones that were used for sex by the West Side Highway; it occupied a whole floor. The whole point of “cruising the trucks” (the real ones) was that it was dangerous. Here it was sanitized and sanded down, as if you could get the same thrill in a facsimile. Similarly, there was a short-lived baths near Times Square in NYC that had recreated a subway bathroom complete with glory hole.

4. What adjectives would you use to describe the exterior of the bath

Nondescript, menacing, unprepossessing, bland.

5. What adjectives would you use to describe the location of the bath

Low down, sleazy, out of the way, warehousey, non-obtrusive.

1. To what extent do you see physical setting as important to the history of bathhouses

3	Unimportant Somewhat Uni Neither Unimp Somewhat Imp
---	--

Notes: There’s a history that a lot of bath visitors like to remember or feel like they are a part of. There’s a definite culture which we no longer get to have due to apps and websites.

2. What ranking values would you assign to the character of each of the following

a. surrounding neighborhood

Unimportant
Somewhat Uni
Niether Unimp
Somewhat Imp

Notes:

A safe feeling neighborhood that is known for having an LGBT presence makes the venture out there seem less daunting

b. particular street

Unimportant
Somewhat Uni
Niether Unimp
Somewhat Imp

Notes:

Being near busy streets so as to make it easy to get to

c. position of buildings relative to their blocks (outward-facing, inward-facing alley-facing, e

Unimportant
Somewhat Uni
Niether Unimp
Somewhat Imp

Notes:

non-descript entrances right off the main road seem to make the experience less "shameful" for people who want to maintain discretion.

d. facades/exterior desig

Unimportant
Somewhat Uni
Niether Unimp
Somewhat Imp

Notes:

Keep it simple. No one wants extra attention (in this day and age)

e. plans/layout

Unimportant
Somewhat Uni
Niether Unimp
Somewhat Imp

Notes:

Simple halls that are easy to follow.

f. finish/decoration/lighting of particular buildin

Notes:

2

Unimportant
Somewhat Uni
Niether Unimp
Somewhat Imp

As long as it's dim, I don't care what the walls look like. I'm not going for culture. I'm going for sexy. BUT, don't be tacky in your decorations. I'm still a gay man.

g. intangible qualities/atmosphere of particular buildings ("it felt safe"), e

Notes:

3

Unimportant
Somewhat Uni
Niether Unimp
Somewhat Imp

Feeling safe due to restrictions in getting in are key, but also being able to secure my belongings and personal security. I, though, like the feeling of seedy and dirty public spaces. I don't want the space to feel too sanitized (though its actual space should be sanitary.)

3. What adjectives would you use to describe the interior design of bath

Seedy, wet, flowing but also confusing, chilly

4. What adjectives would you use to describe the exterior of the bath

Nondescript, flashy (Based on the two that I utilize, which are opposites of each other)

5. What adjectives would you use to describe the location of the bath

Visible

1. To what extent do you see physical setting as important to the history of bathous

2	Unimportant Somewhat Uni Niether Unimp Somewhat Imp
---	--

Notes: It's my thought that gay men want to have sex and it doesn't really matter where. While historic bath houses are very much gone, the physical settings in terms of the actual bathhouse and its interiors may not say as much about a bathhouse and its interpretation as the neighborhood or immediate street in or on which it locates or are located.

2. What ranking values would you assign to the character of each of the followin

a. surrounding neighborhood

5	Unimportant Somewhat Uni Niether Unimp Somewhat Imp
---	--

Notes: N/A

b. particular street

3	Unimportant Somewhat Uni Niether Unimp Somewhat Imp
---	--

Notes: N/A

c. position of buildings relative to their blocks (outward-facing, inward-facing alley-facing, e

3	Unimportant Somewhat Uni Niether Unimp Somewhat Imp
---	--

Notes: N/A

d. facades/exterior desig

2	Unimportant Somewhat Uni Niether Unimp Somewhat Imp
---	--

Notes: N/A

e. plans/layout

Notes:

3	Unimportant Somewhat Uni Niether Unimp Somewhat Imp	N/A
---	--	-----

f. finish/decoration/lighting of particular buildin

Notes:

5	Unimportant Somewhat Uni Niether Unimp Somewhat Imp	N/A
---	--	-----

g. intagible qualities/atmosphere of particular buildings ("it felt safe"), e

Notes:

4	Unimportant Somewhat Uni Niether Unimp Somewhat Imp	
---	--	--

3. What adjectives would you use to describe the interior design of bath

Dark, raunchy, anonymous, disconnected, random, unfulfilling, sinful

4. What adjectives would you use to describe the exterior of the bath

Mysterious, sleek, inconspicuous, lit

5. What adjectives would you use to describe the location of the bath

Known, central, convenient, accessible, walkable

1. To what extent do you see physical setting as important to the history of bathhous

Unimportant
Somewhat Uni
Niether Unimp
Somewhat Imp

Notes:

2. What ranking values would you assign to the character of each of the followin

a. surrounding neighborhood

Unimportant
Somewhat Uni
Niether Unimp
Somewhat Imp

Notes:

b. particular street

Unimportant
Somewhat Uni
Niether Unimp
Somewhat Imp

Notes:

c. position of buildings relative to their blocks (outward-facing, inward-facing alley-facing, e

Unimportant
Somewhat Uni
Niether Unimp
Somewhat Imp

Notes:

d. facades/exterior desig

Notes:

4

Unimportant
Somewhat Uni
Niether Unimp
Somewhat Imp

e. plans/layout

4

Unimportant
Somewhat Uni
Niether Unimp
Somewhat Imp

Notes:

f. finish/decoration/lighting of particular buildin

3

Unimportant
Somewhat Uni
Niether Unimp
Somewhat Imp

Notes:

g. intagible qualities/atmosphere of particular buildings ("it felt safe"), e

2

Unimportant
Somewhat Uni
Niether Unimp
Somewhat Imp

Notes:

3. What adjectives would you use to describe the interior design of bath

Secondary/haphazard

4. What adjectives would you use to describe the exterior of the bath

Subtle/secondary

5. What adjectives would you use to describe the location of the bath

Industrial/commercial/depressed

1. To what extent do you see physical setting as important to the history of bathhous

Unimportant
Somewhat Uni
Niether Unimp
Somewhat Imp

Notes: It takes more than a sign to say this is a place for man to man contact. The physical setting sets the scene for the activity to occur.

2. What ranking values would you assign to the character of each of the followin

a. surrounding neighborhood

Unimportant
Somewhat Uni
Niether Unimp
Somewhat Imp

Notes:

I have been to bathhouses in all sorts of neighborhoods in the US and abroad. If you are looking for a bathhouse, you'll get there regardless of its surroundings. I will say, however, that I never went to the Mount Morris Baths in Harlem when it was open because as a white guy, I figured I wouldn't be welcomed there. If African Americans were interested in white guys, they came to the baths further downtown.

b. particular street

Unimportant
Somewhat Uni
Niether Unimp
Somewhat Imp

Notes:

have gone to bathhouses since the late 1970s. It never mattered what street it was on. I was never in fear of being seen entering a bathhouse.

c. position of buildings relative to their blocks (outward-facing, inward-facing alley-facing, e

Notes:

2

Unimportant
Somewhat Uni
Niether Unimp
Somewhat Imp

Most bathhouses block their windows to the street – activity faces in not out. I just take that for granted when thinking about baths.

d. facades/exterior desig

Notes:

2

Unimportant
Somewhat Uni
Niether Unimp
Somewhat Imp

: Most use existing buildings and their success is more based on their interior than exterior. Of course, the building face is part of the bathhouse design but I never placed much importance on the façade. I just want to get inside and find what is going on and where.

e. plans/layout

Notes:

5

Unimportant
Somewhat Uni
Niether Unimp
Somewhat Imp

For me, this is the essence of the bathhouse. Is it spa like as are many of the European bathhouses or is it seedy like some of the US bathhouses. It doesn't matter – they each create an atmosphere than can be enticing. It's all about anticipation – is there a hot man or hot scene around the corner.

f. finish/decoration/lighting of particular buildin

Notes:

5

Unimportant
Somewhat Uni
Niether Unimp
Somewhat Imp

Lighting needs to make you feel good. Finishes need to be easy to clean – you're going to rub up against all sorts of things. They also need to be sturdy. Since most are barefoot, the floors need to feel clean and not be too slippery. And the decoration is best when it can imply or show sexuality.

g. intangible qualities/atmosphere of particular buildings ("it felt safe"), e

Notes:

4

Unimportant
Somewhat Uni
Niether Unimp
Somewhat Imp

You want to feel safe, you want to feel sexy. Everything needs to work together to bring men together in a sexual way.

3. What adjectives would you use to describe the interior design of bath

Masculine, maze-like, circuitous, a blank shell with temporary insertions

4. What adjectives would you use to describe the exterior of the bath

Blank, protected, incognito, innocuous

5. What adjectives would you use to describe the location of the bath

Out of the way, hidden

1. To what extent do you see physical setting as important to the history of bathhous

Unimportant
Somewhat Uni
Niether Unimp
Somewhat Imp

Notes:

2. What ranking values would you assign to the character of each of the followin

a. surrounding neighborhood

Unimportant
Somewhat Uni
Niether Unimp
Somewhat Imp

Notes:

[Empty notes box]

b. particular street

Unimportant
Somewhat Uni
Niether Unimp
Somewhat Imp

Notes:

[Empty notes box]

c. position of buildings relative to their blocks (outward-facing, inward-facing alley-facing, e

Unimportant
Somewhat Uni
Niether Unimp
Somewhat Imp

Notes:

[Empty notes box]

d. facades/exterior desig

Unimportant
Somewhat Uni
Niether Unimp
Somewhat Imp

Notes:

[Empty notes box]

e. plans/layout

Unimportant
Somewhat Uni
Niether Unimp
Somewhat Imp

Notes:

[Empty notes box]

f. finish/decoration/lighting of particular buildin

Notes:

3

Unimportant
Somewhat Uni
Niether Unimp
Somewhat Imp

g. intangible qualities/atmosphere of particular buildings ("it felt safe"), e

Notes:

3

Unimportant
Somewhat Uni
Niether Unimp
Somewhat Imp

3. What adjectives would you use to describe the interior design of bath

Dark, maze-like, minimal design

4. What adjectives would you use to describe the exterior of the bath

Non-descript, plain, unassuming

5. What adjectives would you use to describe the location of the bath

Hidden in plain sight

1. To what extent do you see physical setting as important to the history of bathous

Unimportant
Somewhat Uni
Niether Unimp
Somewhat Imp

Notes:

[Empty notes box]

2. What ranking values would you assign to the character of each of the followin

a. surrounding neighborhood

Unimportant
Somewhat Uni
Niether Unimp
Somewhat Imp

Notes:

[Empty notes box]

b. particular street

Unimportant
Somewhat Uni
Niether Unimp
Somewhat Imp

Notes:

[Empty notes box]

c. position of buildings relative to their blocks (outward-facing, inward-facing alley-facing, e

Unimportant
Somewhat Uni
Niether Unimp
Somewhat Imp

Notes:

[Empty notes box]

d. facades/exterior desig

Unimportant
Somewhat Uni
Niether Unimp
Somewhat Imp

Notes:

the more nondescript and unremarkable the better

e. plans/layout

Notes:

[Empty notes box]

5

Unimportant
Somewhat Uni
Niether Unimp
Somewhat Imp

[Empty response box]

f. finish/decoration/lighting of particular buildin

Notes:

4

Unimportant
Somewhat Uni
Niether Unimp
Somewhat Imp

[Empty response box]

g. intagible qualities/atmosphere of particular buildings ("it felt safe"), e

Notes:

4

Unimportant
Somewhat Uni
Niether Unimp
Somewhat Imp

good circulation flow; a variety of types of spaces, the right balance of people to space (i.e., not so spacious that it feels empty); music is important

3. What adjectives would you use to describe the interior design of bath

Spartan, utilitarian, functional, butch

4. What adjectives would you use to describe the exterior of the bath

discreet, inobtrusive, downscale

5. What adjectives would you use to describe the location of the bath

usually, but not always, in a seedier part of town, a forgotten part, a nondescript part, a part of town where there's no "there" there (to borrow from Gertrude Stein), but also usually, but not always, relatively close to a downtown and a gayborhood (but not in it); a location where people would be unlikely to be seen entering or exiting; cheap real estate

1. To what extent do you see physical setting as important to the history of bathhous

Unimportant
Somewhat Uni
Niether Unimp
Somewhat Imp

Notes:

2. What ranking values would you assign to the character of each of the followin

a. surrounding neighborhood

Unimportant
Somewhat Uni
Niether Unimp
Somewhat Imp

Notes:

b. particular street

Unimportant
Somewhat Uni
Niether Unimp
Somewhat Imp

Notes:

c. position of buildings relative to their blocks (outward-facing, inward-facing alley-facing, e

Unimportant
Somewhat Uni
Niether Unimp
Somewhat Imp

Notes:

d. facades/exterior desig

Notes:

Unimportant
Somewhat Uni
Niether Unimp
Somewhat Imp

Not flashy

e. plans/layout

Notes:

Unimportant
Somewhat Uni
Niether Unimp
Somewhat Imp

Notes:

f. finish/decoration/lighting of particular buildin

Notes:

Unimportant
Somewhat Uni
Niether Unimp
Somewhat Imp

Notes:

g. intagible qualities/atmosphere of particular buildings ("it felt safe"), e

Notes:

Unimportant
Somewhat Uni
Niether Unimp
Somewhat Imp

Notes:

3. What adjectives would you use to describe the interior design of bath

hidden, sleezy

4. What adjectives would you use to describe the exterior of the bath

N/A

5. What adjectives would you use to describe the location of the bath

N/A

1. To what extent do you see physical setting as important to the history of bathhous

Unimportant
Somewhat Uni
Niether Unimp
Somewhat Imp

Notes: N/A

2. What ranking values would you assign to the character of each of the followin

a. surrounding neighborhood

Unimportant
Somewhat Uni
Niether Unimp
Somewhat Imp

Notes:

b. particular street

Unimportant
Somewhat Uni
Niether Unimp
Somewhat Imp

Notes:

c. position of buildings relative to their blocks (outward-facing, inward-facing alley-facing, e

Notes:

2

Unimportant
Somewhat Uni
Niether Unimp
Somewhat Imp

Empty rectangular box for notes.

d. facades/exterior desig

Notes:

3

Unimportant
Somewhat Uni
Niether Unimp
Somewhat Imp

Empty rectangular box for notes.

e. plans/layout

Notes:

4

Unimportant
Somewhat Uni
Niether Unimp
Somewhat Imp

Empty rectangular box for notes.

f. finish/decoration/lighting of particular buildin

Notes:

5

Unimportant
Somewhat Uni
Niether Unimp
Somewhat Imp

Empty rectangular box for notes.

g. intagible qualities/atmosphere of particular buildings ("it felt safe"), e

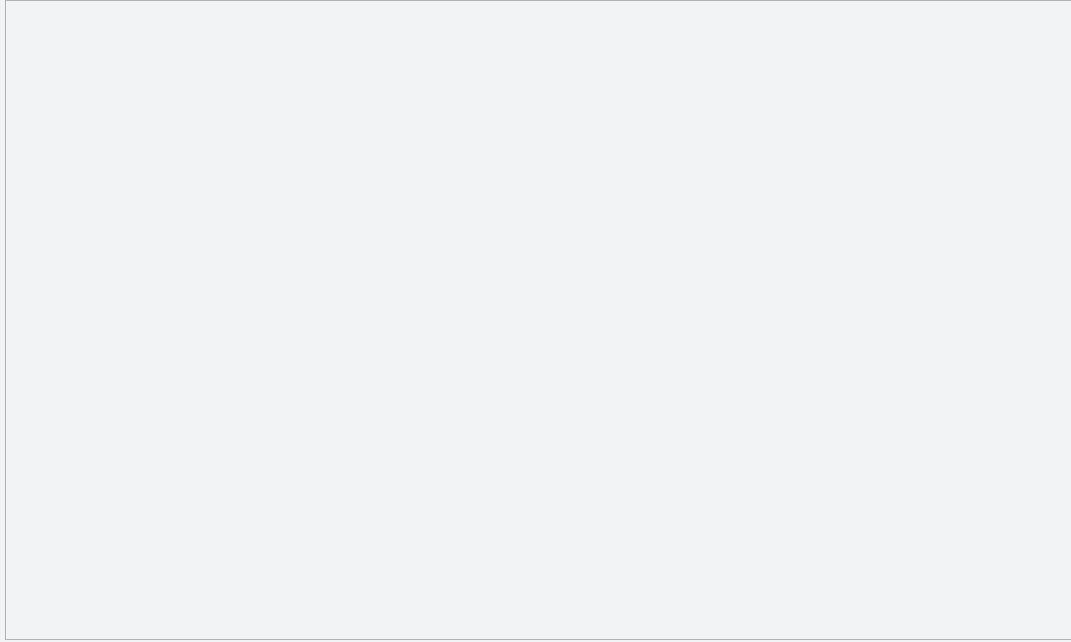
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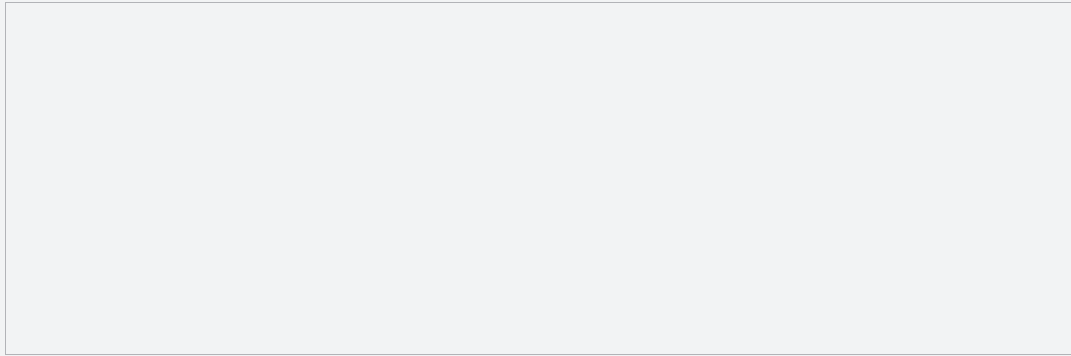
Unimportant
Somewhat Uni
Niether Unimp
Somewhat Imp

Empty rectangular box for notes.

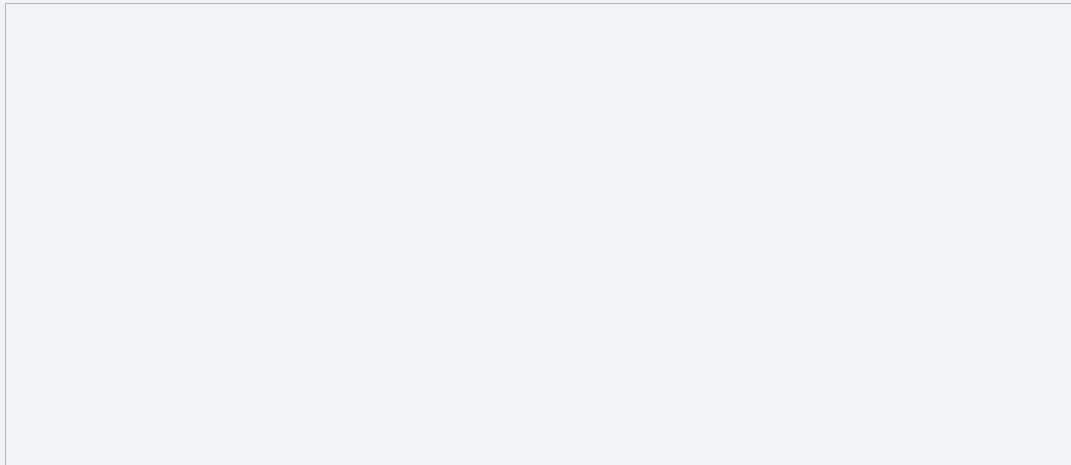
3. What adjectives would you use to describe the interior design of bath



4. What adjectives would you use to describe the exterior of the bath



5. What adjectives would you use to describe the location of the bath



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